

The Chat

Vol. 81

WINTER 2017

No. 1



The Quarterly Bulletin of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
The Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

THE CHAT

ISSN No. 0009-1987

Vol. 81

WINTER 2017

No. 1

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THE CHAT is published quarterly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612. Individual subscription price \$25 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Pinehurst, NC and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE CHAT, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374.

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2016 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

**Nathan A. Swick¹, Chair, Susan Campbell, Samuel Cooper,
W. Jefferson Lemons, Michael McCloy, Z. Taylor Piephoff,
Steven P. Shultz, Joshua L. Southern, Simon R. B. Thompson**

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The make-up of the 2016 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of Samuel Cooper, W. Jefferson Lemons, and Joshua L. Southern as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Jeffrey S. Pippen, H. Douglas Pratt, and Michael H. Tove rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

Accepted as Valid. The following reports were judged to be acceptable.

White-cheeked Pintail(*Anas bahamensis*) (15-20). A written description with photos of a bird at Pea Island NWR (Dare) on 30 September 2015 and submitted by Audrey Whitlock was reviewed by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) in 2015. The committee voted 7-2(QO) to accept, but such a vote requires outside review and resubmission as a Class C report and the record was left unresolved in 2015. In 2016 the committee considered the report again, with included comments from Edward Brinkley and Andy Kratter. The committee resolved that those comments established a useful standard for natural vagrancy of this Caribbean species which was met by this individual, and the report was accepted 8-1(QO) on the second ballot. This represents the first accepted state record and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List. Two additional reports of this species have been considered by the committee in recent years, both of which were not accepted by virtue of Questionable Origin. With the acceptance of this record the committee may have cause to re-evaluate these reports in the future.

Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*) (16-01). The NCBRC reviewed written reports by Ed Corey and Scott Winton, with photos by Winton, of an individual of this species observed on the South Core Banks of Cape Lookout National Seashore (Carteret) on 31 January 2016, originally found by Jon Altman on 26 January 2016 and present through at least 27 February. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents the first state record for the species and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) (16-02). A report with photographs submitted by Chelsea Weithman of an alternate plumaged bird of the nominate subspecies, discovered by Weithman in Frisco (Dare) on 8 April 2016,

was considered by the committee and accepted unanimously. This record represents the eighth in North Carolina for this species, and the fourth spring record (LeGrand et al. 2016)

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (16-03). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report and photographs of an individual of this species from upper Lake Norman (Davidson/Iredell) on 10 April 2016 from Nathan Gatto. This represents the sixth inland record for the state (LeGrand et al. 2015).

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) (16-04). The NCBRC reviewed written records with photos from Lucas Bobay and Sam Jolly of an individual at the Lake Landing impoundments at Mattamuskeet NWR (Hyde) first discovered on 29 April 2016 and present through 9 May. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents the first state record for the species and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (16-06). A 31 May 2016 written report with photos submitted by Dwayne Martin from Lookout Shoals Lake (Catawba/Iredell) of an adult bird was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This is the first inland record of this species for North Carolina, which is a casual visitor to the coast (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) (16-07). THE NCBRC reviewed a written report and photos submitted by Rob Van Epps of a bird seen on 5 May 2016 at Lake Davidson (Mecklenberg). The committee voted on the written report and photos separately, resulting in a split decision for both - 6-3(ID) for the former and 3-6(ID) for the latter. The report was then submitted for outside review and, following comments by Ted Floyd and Dave Irons, the written report was accepted 8-1(ID) on the second ballot. Because the photos were not accepted on the first ballot, the species is placed on the Provisional List.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) (16-08). The committee unanimously accepted photos of a Cliff Swallow taken at Alligator River NWR (Dare) on 4 Jan 2016 by Michael Gosselin. This is the first winter record for North Carolina and one of only very few winter records of Cliff Swallow in the United States.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) (16-09). The NCBRC reviewed and unanimously accepted photos and remarks by Martin Wall and Henry Link of a White-faced Ibis observed at upper Lake Brandt (Guilford) on 4 April 2016. This is the first accepted record for this species away from the coast where there have been multiple records in recent years (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) (16-10). Details and photos from LynnErla Beegle and Jeff Lewis of a female-type bird at Alligator River NWR (Dare), originally found by Harry LeGrand on 11 December 2015 and present through 1 January 2016 were considered and unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents only the third winter record of this Eurasian shorebird species

in North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) (16-11). A young individual of this species appeared near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, Buxton (Dare) in mid June, and lingered through the middle of July. The committee reviewed photos and a written report from Michael Gosselin from 17 June 2016 which was unanimously accepted. This represents the first accepted state record for the species and by virtue of the submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (16-12). The committee reviewed and unanimously accepted photos and remarks on a subadult bird found at the Ridge Junction Overlook of the Blue Ridge Parkway (Yancey) on 28 September 2016 by Simon Thompson. This represents the sixth record for North Carolina of this endangered warbler, all but one of which are from fall (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) (16-13). The NCBRC received a written report with photos from Ed Corey, along with additional photos from Jan Hansen, Lucas Bobay, and Jeannie Kraus of a basic plumage bird from East Shackleford Banks (Carteret) present from 2 October 2016 through mid-November. The report was unanimously accepted. This represents the 9th record for North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 2016).

Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) (16-14). The NCBRC received written details and photographs from Peter Quadarella of an individual visiting a feeder in Matthews (Union) on 22 November 2016. The report was unanimously accepted. Though there are about 12 previous records for the state and the species is on the Definitive List, this record is the fifth for the Piedmont region (LeGrand et al. 2015).

Not Accepted. The following reports were judged to be not accepted.

Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*) (16-05). One of the more puzzling reports in recent memory, an unquestionable Yellow-headed Caracara was admitted to a bird rehabilitation facility in West Jefferson (Ashe) following a collision with a motorcycle, where many photos were taken by Jeff Lemons and facility staff. While the species is infrequently kept in captivity, the committee unanimously questioned the origin of this individual and voted to not accept this record 0-9(QO) due to the perceived unlikelihood that a mostly sedentary species from northern South America with little to no pattern of vagrancy would be a candidate to occur naturally in North Carolina.

Unresolved. No reports are pending.

Summary

With this round of voting, White-cheeked Pintail, Mountain Plover, Little Egret, and Crested Caracara are added to the Definitive List, and Violet-green Swallow is added to the Provisional List. The total number of species from North Carolina is now 482 on the Accepted List of which 467 are Definitive (gain of four species over the final 2015 List), two are considered Not Established, and 13 are Provisional (gain of one species over the final 2015 list).

Literature Cited

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, N. Swick, and T. Howard. 2016. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance. <http://ncbirds.carolinabirdclub.org/>

General Field Notes

General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.

Second Record of Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) for South Carolina

M. Paul Serridge

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On the afternoon of 30 November 2016, Michael Oliver, a Greenville County Bird Club member, reported an immature Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) seen from the West Bay observation deck of Lake Conestee Nature Park, in Greenville County, SC, located at 34°46'37.1" N, 82°21'16.4" W.

Around eight o'clock on the morning of the following day, 1 December 2016, the bird was seen and photographed by Anthony Q. Martin in the same location (Figure 1 & 2). A few minutes later Michael Oliver, Michael Robertson, and Paul Serridge observed the bird as it flew along a narrow waterway between the West Bay and the North Slough.

Anthony Q. Martin took several diagnostic photographs which showed the bird had been banded. Subsequent follow up by Chris Hill determined that the bird had been banded just prior to fledging on 16 July 2016 in a private mitigation wetland near Fellsmere, Florida.

A detailed report and photographs were submitted to the South Carolina Bird Records Committee for review. Formal acceptance of this record is currently pending.

The first report of a Snail Kite in South Carolina was of an adult male bird found at Elliott's Landing Crawfish Ponds, near Rimini, in Clarendon County, from 14 May 2007 through 16 June 2007 (Slyce et al. 2009). This was also the first confirmed report of a Snail Kite in the United States outside Florida. Presumably that bird found an adequate food supply at the ponds. Such was apparently not the case at Lake Conestee Nature Park because, despite repeated visits to Lake Conestee Nature Park by many birders, the bird was not reported again after 1 December.

In addition to these South Carolina reports, a dead adult male Snail Kite was found in the in the Crusoe Island community in Columbus County, NC, on 10 April 2009. That bird was determined to be recently dead but emaciated and in poor health (Helms and LeGrand, 2010).

Literature Cited

- Helms, James C. and LeGrand, Harry E., Jr. 2010.
First Record of Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) for North Carolina
The Chat 74: 35-37.
- LeGrand, H. E., Jr., K. E. Camburn, S. Cooper, R. J. Davis, E. V. Dean,
W.K. Forsythe, J. S. Pippen, M. H. Tove, and R. L. Tyndall. 2010.
2009 annual report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee.
The Chat 74: 1-5.
- Slyce, D., G. Beaton, L. Glover, C. Hill, T. Piephoff, W. Post, and S. Wagner.
2009.
2008 annual report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee.
The Chat 73:105-106.



Figure 1. Immature Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville County, SC, 1 December 2016. Photo by Anthony Q. Martin.



Figure 2. Immature Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville County, SC, 1 December 2016. Photo by Anthony Q. Martin.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2016, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1 - February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1 - May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1 - July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1 - November 30	due December 20

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Reports published herein may include sightings that require review by the state bird record's committee. Such reports are not considered accepted records until, and unless, they are so ruled by the committee.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **BRP** – Blue Ridge Parkway, **Co** – County, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **St** – Street, **T. S.** – Tropical Storm, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

Greater White-fronted Goose: Six at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 29 Oct (Tammy Hester) and eight there 30 Oct (David Youngblood) were somewhat early.

Snow Goose: Seven on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 13 Oct (Audrey Whitlock) were the earliest fall arrivals.

Ross's Goose: An adult photographed at Pee Dee NWR, Anson Co, NC, 20 Nov (Matt Janson, Martina Nordstrand, et al.) was unusual for that part of the state. Another adult was seen at a more typical site, the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, NC, 27 Nov (Ed Corey).

Brant: A juvenile on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 18 Nov (Audrey Whitlock) through 22 Nov (Alan MacEachren) was unusual for that site.

Tundra Swan: Two on South Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 13 Oct (Audrey Whitlock) were the earliest fall arrivals.

Eurasian Wigeon: At least one drake was seen at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 13 Oct (Audrey Whitlock) into winter (m. obs.) while two drakes were seen at that site 15 Oct (Jeff Lewis, Whitlock), 21 Oct (Ricky Davis), and 29 Oct (Lewis).

American Wigeon: Two photographed on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 3 Sep (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock) were somewhat early.

American Black Duck: Four at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 1 Oct (Jack Rogers, et al.) were somewhat early for that area.

Mottled Duck: Sightings in NC included one at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, 5 Nov (Sam Cooper) and two at the same site 6 Nov (Sherry Lane).

Northern Pintail: A drake in eclipse plumage in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 13 Aug (Ricky Davis) may have summered there.

Redhead: Continuing from summer were two at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, until 7 Sep (Audrey Whitlock) and a hen on the pond next to the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, until 6 Oct (Martin Wall).

Ring-necked Duck: Two on Kingfisher Pond at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 30 Sep (Dennis Forsythe, et al.) were somewhat early.

Common Eider: A first-winter drake photographed on the Kiawah River near Mingo Point, Charleston Co, SC, 29 Oct (Juliana Smith, et al.) was early, unusual off the ocean. A hen was seen by many along the Oceanana Pier in Atlantic Beach, Carteret Co, NC, 17-28 Nov (Martin Wall, m. obs.).

Surf Scoter: An immature bird photographed on Beaver Lake, Buncombe Co, NC, 10 Nov (John Koon, m. obs.) was good find for that inland site.

Common Goldeneye: A hen seen and photographed on the campus of Charleston Southern University, Charleston Co, SC, 27-28 Oct (Matthew Campbell, m. obs.) was somewhat early.

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen at three sites in Charleston Co, SC—along the Pitt St Causeway, 28 Aug (Jack Rogers); at The Center for



Common Eider, 18 Nov 2016, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall.

Birds of Prey, 3 Sep (Ed Blitch); and in a parking lot near Northwoods Mall, 12 Sep (Charles Donnelly). Individuals were also found at three sites in Dare Co, NC— visiting a feeder in Waves, 19 Aug (Karen Lebing); visiting a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, 23 Nov (fide Jeff Lewis); and in a yard in Nags Head, 27-28 Nov (Audrey Whitlock).

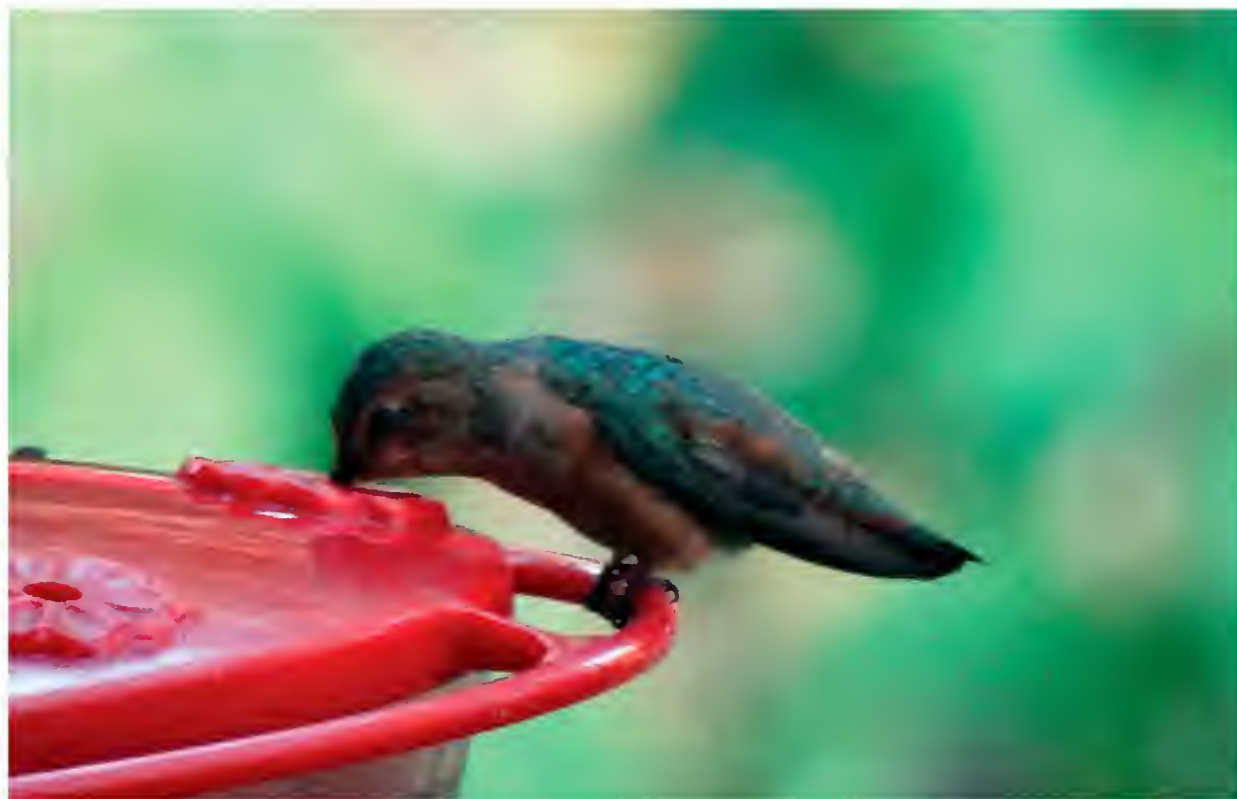
Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 50+ at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, after the passage of a cold front, 23 Oct (John Fussell, et al.) was a good count. One photographed on the campus of Charleston Southern University, Charleston Co, SC, 11 Nov (David Perry) was the last one reported this fall.

Black-billed Cuckoo: Individuals were seen at Patriot's Point, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Oct (Jake Zadik) through 9 Oct (Jack Rogers, m. obs.); at Sandy Creek Park, Durham Co, NC, 12 Oct (Ken Lundstrom); along the boardwalk in Duck, Dare Co, NC, 16 Oct (Jeff Lewis); and near the Old Coast Guard Station at the north end of Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 22 Oct (Ricky Davis, et al.).

Eastern Whip-poor-will: Lingering birds responded to audio playback at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, an adult male, 13 Nov (John Fussell, et al.) and at Ev-Henwood Nature Preserve, Brunswick Co, NC, 16 Nov (David Weesner).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: An adult male that visited a feeder at Reedy Creek Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 2 Nov (Leigh Anne Carter, et al.) was rather late for a site in the Piedmont.

Rufous Hummingbird: An adult male visited a feeder at Village Greens



Selasphorus Hummingbird, 27 Nov 2016, Lexington Co, SC.
Photo by Jerry Griggs.

Golf Course in Spartanburg Co, SC, 27 Aug (Edgar Woodfin). An immature male visiting a feeder in Burlington, Alamance Co, NC, in early November (Rhonda Weiss) was banded 12 Nov (Susan Campbell).

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird: Individuals not identified to species visited feeders in Otway, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Oct (Sue Edwards); in Woodford, Ashe Co, NC, 30 Oct (Martha Cutler) through 26 Nov (Richard Gray); and near Irmo, Lexington Co, SC, 26 Nov into winter (Jerry Griggs).

Yellow Rail: A moribund individual was found beneath a cell phone tower in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 7 Nov (John Fussell).

Clapper Rail: A moribund individual photographed in an urban area of Hickory, Catawba Co, NC, after presumably colliding into a window, 5 Sep (Debbie Lockman, fide Brian Bockhahn) was a first for that county.

Virginia Rail: 77 along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, during a period of high water following the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 9 Oct (John Fussell, Martha Mayo, Martin Wall) was a noteworthy count.

Sora: 34 were counted along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, during a period of high water following the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 9 Oct (John Fussell, Martha Mayo, Martin Wall).

Sandhill Crane: A pair seen in flight near the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 15 Sep (Jen Lee) was probably the same pair seen at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, a week later, 23-24 Sep (Karen Lebing, m. obs.), and possibly the same pair photographed in Sladesville, Hyde Co, NC, 26 Sep (Allie Mulligan).

American Avocet: Inland sightings included 11 at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 10 Sep (Eddie Owens, m. obs.) and 11 at the pond along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, NC, 16 Oct (Henry Link). One wonders if both sightings were of the same 11 avocets.

Black-bellied Plover: Good finds for the mountain region were two at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, NC, 10 Aug (Mike Judd, et al.); one at Lake James SP in Burke Co, NC, 27 Sep (Jamie Cameron) through 30 Sep (Dwayne Martin); and one at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 29 Sep (Claire Herzog, et al.).

American Golden-Plover: Sightings included one in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 21 Aug (Ricky Davis) through 24 Aug (Jamie Adams); two at that same site, 28 Aug (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock); one or two at the Super Sod Farm in Orangeburg Co, SC, 26 Aug (Harold Donnelly) through 15 Sep (m. obs.); one at the American Turf Farm along US-64 in Washington Co, NC, 3 Sep (Ed Corey) and 4 Sep (Davis); one or two at a pond along US-64 just east of Creswell, Washington Co, NC, 3 Sep (Mandy & Phil Cumming) and 4 Sep (Davis); five at Bucksport Sod Farm, Horry Co, SC, 3 Sep (Mandy Johnson) and 6 Sep (Chris Hill, John Hutchens); one photographed at the Cape Hatteras Campground, Dare Co, NC, 13 Sep (Paul Brubaker, Michael Gosselin, et al.); one photographed on the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 16 Oct (Jamie Adams, John Fussell, Martin Wall, et al.); one at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 17 Oct (Maggie Peretto) through 23 Oct (m. obs.); and two at Roxbury Park, Charleston Co, SC, 20 Nov (Tom Austin).

Snowy Plover: An individual at Rich Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 20 Aug through 10 Sep (Derb Carter, m. obs.) was likely the same individual seen in that area last year.

Wilson's Plover: NC's and SC's respective high counts were 65 on Bird Shoal at the Rachel Carson Reserve, Carteret Co, 22 Aug (John Fussell) and 68 on Deveaux Bank, Charleston Co, 19 Aug (Janet Thibault). One near the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 29 Aug (Martin Wall) and 4 Sep (Fussell, et al.) was unusual for a site away from the coast. Three lingering at the Rachel Carson Reserve 18 Nov (Fussell) were probably attempting to over-winter there.

Piping Plover: A total of 90 around Ophelia Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 20 Aug (Jeff Lemons, et al.) was a great count. One photographed on the Davidson Creek arm of Lake Norman in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 18 Aug (Rob Van Epps) was a great find for the Piedmont.

Upland Sandpiper: Nine in the tall grass surrounding the Wilmington International Airport, New Hanover Co, NC, 27 Aug (Mike Stewart) was a good count. Sightings made at sod farms included two at Super Sod along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 8-9 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.); one at Oakland Plantation Turf, Bladen Co, NC, 3 Sep (Jeff Phippen); and one

at Bucksport Sod, Horry Co, SC, 3 Sep (Chris Hill). Away from sod farms, individuals were seen in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 7 Aug (Ricky Davis); at the airport in Beaufort, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Aug (Martin Wall); at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 14 Aug (John Fussell, Martha Mayo); and on the lawn in front of the Skyco WTP on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, NC, 4-5 Sep (Jim Gould, m. obs.). One photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 3 Sep (Sam Cooper) was unusual for that sandy habitat.

Long-billed Curlew: Sightings included one on the south side of Ophelia Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 20-21 Aug (Jeff Lemons, et al.) and 23 Aug (Greg Perry); and two on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 3 Sep (David McLean, et al.).

Hudsonian Godwit: Individuals were photographed on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 14 Sep (Michael Gosselin, Audrey Whitlock); at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Sep (Gilbert Grant, Sam Cooper); at the pond adjacent to the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 6 Oct (Martin Wall); along NC-12 in Waves, Dare Co, NC, 10 Oct (Karen Lebing); and, possibly the same individual, in nearby Rodanthe, 21-24 Oct (Albert Kuhnigk, m. obs.).

Bar-tailed Godwit: NC's second Bar-tailed Godwit of 2016 was found amongst a flock of Marbled Godwits on the east end of Shackleford Banks near



Hudsonian Godwit, 10 Oct 2016, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Karen Lebing.

Barden Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 2 Oct (John Fussell, et al.). Because it was in nonbreeding plumage, it was able to be identified to the European subspecies. The godwit was seen and photographed by many until last seen 15 Nov (Jan Hansen). The individual photographed in Frisco, 8 Apr 2016, was erroneously reported as “NC’s fourth.” In actuality it was NC’s fourth spring record, and about ninth overall, making this most recent sighting about NC’s tenth.

Marbled Godwit: Three photographed at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 10 Sep (Eddie Owens) were great finds for that inland site.

Ruddy Turnstone: One seen and photographed at Archie Elledge WTP (limited access), Forsyth Co, NC, 5-14 Sep (David Shuford, m. obs.) was the only sighting made outside of the coastal plain.

Red Knot: Two at the American Turf farm along US-64 in Washington Co, NC, after the passage of T. S. Hermine, 4 Sep (Ricky Davis, et al.) were good finds for that site away from the coast.

Sanderling: Inland sightings included one or two on Lake Brandt, Guilford Co, NC, 2 Sep (Henry Link, et al.); two at the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 11 Sep (Steve Shultz); and one at Lake James SP in Burke Co, NC, 26 Sep (Jamie Cameron).

Dunlin: Individuals at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 6 Nov (Eddie Owens, Lucas Bobay) and at Lake Wheeler, Wake Co, NC, 10 Nov (Harry LeGrand) were good finds for those inland lakes.

Purple Sandpiper: Locally unusual were individuals at Folly Beach County Park, Charleston Co, SC, 20 Oct (Carlos Sanchez, et al.) through 29 Oct (m. obs.) and on the rocks at Shell Point on Harkers Island, Carteret Co, NC, 8 Nov (David & Susan Disher, Marbry Hopkins).

Baird’s Sandpiper: Sightings, all made in NC, included one at Rich Inlet, New Hanover Co, 13 Aug (Derb Carter); one in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, 21 Aug (Ricky Davis) and 10 Sep (Lucas Bobay, et al.); two at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane, Henderson Co, 31 Aug (Wayne Forsythe) though 3 Sep (m. obs.); three at the American Turf farm in Washington Co, 4 Sep (Davis); one at a pond along US-64 just east of Creswell, Washington Co, 4 Sep (Ed Corey, et al.); one photographed at Cane Creek Reservoir, Orange Co, 9 Sep (Benjamin Dunnington); and one in a field northeast of Brevard, Transylvania Co, 30 Sep (Michael Plauche) and 4 Oct (Mike Judd, et al.).

White-rumped Sandpiper: 67 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 3 Sep (Audrey Whitlock) was a noteworthy count. A flock of 21 along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, during a period of high water following the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 9 Oct (John Fussell, et al.) was an unusually high count for that area.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: High counts at sod farms were 13 at Super Sod in Henderson Co, NC, 2 Sep (Claire Herzog, et al.); three at Modern Turf in Sumter Co, SC, 3 Sep (Steve Patterson); 28 at American Turf in Washington

Co, NC, 4 Sep (Ricky Davis); and seven at Super Sod in Orangeburg Co, SC, 4 Sep (Andy Harrison) and 5 Sep (Kevin DeBoer). Sightings made away from sod farms included two in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Aug (Davis); one near New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 31 Aug (Gilbert Grant); one photographed on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 31 Aug (Elizabeth Wilkins); one at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 1 Sep (Martin Wall); one photographed at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Sep (Jamie Adams); one photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 3 Sep (Sam Cooper); one in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, 5 Sep (Davis); and one at the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 11 Sep (Steve Shultz).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Inland sightings included one or two at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 10 Aug (Mike Judd, et al.) through 17 Aug (Simon Thompson); one or two at the Super Sod farm in Orangeburg Co, SC, 28 Aug (Judy Walker) through 15 Sep (Harold Donnelly); one at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 2 Sep (Lucas Bobay, m. obs.); one in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt, Guilford Co, NC, 2-11 Sep (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.); one photographed at Belews Lake, Stokes Co, NC, 4 Sep (Jesse Anderson); one photographed at the Hemmingway WTP, Williamsburg Co, SC, 11-12 Sep (Pam Ford, et al.); one at the upper end of Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 12 Sep (Thornton) and 18 Sep (Erik Thomas); and one in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 14-18 Sep (m. obs.).

Long-billed Dowitcher: One photographed at Swan Lake on the campus of Furman University, Greenville Co, SC, 16 Oct (Joan Baker) was a good find for that area.

Spotted Sandpiper: One seen and photographed at Lake Hickory in Caldwell Co, NC, 25-26 Nov (Caroline Martin) was quite late for a site so far from the coast.

Willet: Three photographed in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt, Guilford Co, NC, 31 Aug (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.) was the only report from an inland site this fall.

Wilson's Phalarope: Individuals were seen in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 21 Aug (Ricky Davis) through 29 Aug (Sherry Lane); on the lawn in front of the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, Dare Co, NC, 3 Sep (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock); in a rainwater pool at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, 4 Sep (Wade Fuller); at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, where photographed, 14 Sep (Michael Gosselin, Whitlock) and 20 Sep (Whitlock); at Falls Lake in Wake Co, NC, 19 Sep (Brian Bockhahn); and at Horse Creek WTP (restricted access), Aiken Co, SC, where photographed, 1 Oct (Lois Stacey).

Red-necked Phalarope: The passage of T. S. Hermine resulted in multiple sightings—one photographed on the beach on the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Sep (Jake Zadik); one at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC,



Spotted Sandpiper, 26 Nov 2016, Caldwell Co, NC.
Photo by Caroline Martin.

2-3 Sep (Lucas Bobay, m. obs.); ten at the American Turf farm, Washington Co, NC, 3 Sep (Ed Corey); and one at the Outer Banks Arboretum, Dare Co, NC, 4 Sep (Peggy Eubank).

Skua species: A very rare from-shore sighting was made of a skua over the ocean off Coquina Beach, Dare Co, NC, 21 Oct (Ricky Davis). A South Polar Skua would be the more likely candidate during the fall season.

South Polar Skua: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 5 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger: One, probably sick or injured, was photographed on the beach in Avon, Dare Co, NC, 3 Oct (Jacque Gates). Healthier individuals were seen flying over the ocean off Figure Eight Island, New Hanover Co, NC, a dark-morph bird, 30 Sep (Derb Carter) and off Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 21 Oct (Ricky Davis).

Parasitic Jaeger: Sightings made from shore included a juvenile photographed over the ocean off Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 14 Sep (Jamie Adams); one harassing terns off Figure Eight Island, New Hanover Co, NC, 30 Sep (Derb Carter); a dark-morph bird over Waterfront Park, Charleston Co, SC, 7 Oct (Jack Rogers); seven off Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 21 Oct (Ricky Davis); five off Coquina Beach, Dare Co, NC, 21 Oct (Davis); one off the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 28 Oct

(Michael Gamble, Nancy Raginski); and one off the Oceanana Pier in Atlantic Beach, Carteret Co, NC, 20 Nov (John Fussell, et al.).

Jaeger species: Four in flight over the Bogue Sound in Carteret Co, NC, during the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 8 Oct (John Fussell) were most likely Parasitic Jaegers.

Thick-billed Murre: An injured Thick-billed Murre found on a road in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 30 Nov, was taken to a wildlife rehabilitator but died a few days later (fide John Fussell). The specimen was collected by the NC Museum of Natural History.

Black Guillemot: On of the most exciting finds of the fall, a Black Guillemot was seen and photographed around the jetties at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 27 Nov (Michael Robertson) into December (m. obs.). Already accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting provides SC with its fourth record of this alcid.

Sabine's Gull: Pending review by the SC BRC was the report of a juvenile at the dam on Lake Hartwell, Anderson Co, SC, during the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 8 Oct (Brian Barchus). Interestingly, while there are dozens of records from NC, there are only three accepted records of Sabine's Gull in SC.

Laughing Gull: A juvenile photographed at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 20 Aug (George Ivey) through 31 Aug (Kirk Gardner) was unusual for the mountain region.

Franklin's Gull: An adult seen and photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 13 Sep (Sam Cooper) through 21 Sep (Gilbert Grant) was the only one reported this fall.

Iceland Gull: An immature bird seen and photographed on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 25 Nov (Henry Link, et al.) into December (m. obs.) was a first for that county.

Sooty Tern: The passage of T. S. Hermine resulted in the sightings of 17 at the American Turf farm in Washington Co, NC, 3 Sep (Ed Corey) and two at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 3 Sep (Patricia & Russ Tyndall, Ricky Davis). Hurricane Matthew deposited 26+ at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Oct (Sam Cooper) and one off the Pitt St Causeway, Charleston Co, SC, 8 Oct (Jack Rogers).

Bridled Tern: An immature bird photographed on the jetty at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, during a nighttime kayak tour, 17 Aug (Paul Laurent) was quite unusual because the weather was calm at the time, and historically most onshore sightings are related to the passage of a tropical storm. After the passage of T. S. Hermine, an immature bird was photographed on the beach at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 3 Sep (Sam Cooper) and an adult was photographed in Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 3 Sep (Kate Sutherland). The passage of Hurricane Matthew a month later resulted in the sightings of 12 at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Oct (Sam Cooper); three on Figure Eight Island, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Oct (Derb Carter);



Bridled Tern, 3 Sept 2016, New Hanover Co, NC. Photo by Sam Cooper.

one off the Pitt St Causeway, Charleston Co, SC, 8 Oct (Jack Rogers); and a juvenile photographed in Litchfield Beach, Georgetown Co, SC, 8 Oct (Jerry Kerschner).

Black Tern: Eight at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, during the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 8 Oct (Sam Cooper) were rather late.

Roseate Tern: Individuals were seen in Ocean Isle Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 5 Aug (Andrew Rapp) and on the beach at the north end of Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, where photographed, 21 Aug (Greg Hudson).

Common Tern: 800 on the beach on the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 17 Sep (Blaine Carnes) was a fantastic count.

Forster's Tern: 400+ at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 29 Nov (Sam Cooper) was a noteworthy count.

Royal Tern: Following the passage of Hurricane Matthew, individuals were seen at the dam on J. Strom Thurmond Lake, McCormick Co, SC, 8 Oct (Liam Wolff, et al.) and at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 9 Oct (Ricky Davis).

White-tailed Tropicbird: Two adults were seen and photographed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 26 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: Individuals were found on two inland lakes in late November—on Lake Hartwell, Pickens Co, SC, 23 Nov (Kevin Kubach, Austen Pickhardt) and on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, a juvenile, 25 Nov (Jan Hansen) and 28 Nov (Matt Spangler).

Audubon's Shearwater: A moribund individual was found on the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 7 Aug (John Fussell, et al.). A sick or

injured individual was photographed on the beach at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 10 Aug (Ben Graham). Furthermore, a wildlife rehabilitator reported that five shearwaters had been found on beaches around Wilmington 7-10 Aug (fide Graham).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: One photographed over Onslow Bay, off Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, following the passage of T. S. Hermine, 4 Sep (Kathy Richardson) was a good find so close to shore.

White-faced Storm-Petrel: One seen and photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 28 Aug (Brian Patteson). It had been seven years since the last time this species was seen in the Carolinas!

Leach's Storm-Petrel: Hurricane Matthew blew individuals onto Figure Eight Island, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Oct (Derb Carter) and far inland to J. Strom Thurmond Lake, McCormick Co, SC, 8 Oct (Blaine Carnes, Michael Rodgers). The latter report is pending review by the SC BRC.

Wood Stork: Inland sightings included one at Ninety-Six Lake, Greenwood Co, SC, 5 Sep & 19 Sep (Rusty Wilson); up to four in the New Hope Creek arm of Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 10-19 Sep (Matt Spangler, Neil Skoog, m. obs.); and two at Goodale SP, Kershaw Co, SC, 24 Sep (Caroline Eastman). Especially exciting were individuals found at three sites in the mountain/ foothills region of NC, all county firsts—at Charles D. Owen Park, Buncombe Co, where photographed, 10-11 Sep (Ryan Lubbers, m. obs.); in flight over the Linville Falls Golf Club, McDowell Co, 13 Sep (Gordon Warburton); and at Lookout Shoals Lake, Catawba Co, on the later date of 18 Oct (Joshua Christian).

Magnificent Frigatebird: An immature was photographed in flight over the beach in Garden City, Georgetown Co, SC, 10 Aug (Sudie Thomas). Pending review by the NC BRC are two T. S. Hermine-related inland sightings—an adult female seen over west Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, 3 Sep (Jay Johnston) and an individual photographed over Wilson, Wilson Co, NC, 3 Sep (Ann Brice), a first for that county.

Masked Booby: A first-year individual was seen and photographed on the beach of the North Core Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 26-27 Sep (Jessica DeBoer).

Brown Booby: The individual seen on Lookout Shoals Lake, border of Catawba and Iredell Co, NC, during the summer, remained throughout the fall period (m. obs.), until last seen 5 Dec (fide Dwayne Martin). Amazingly, a second adult Brown Booby was photographed on another lake in western NC during the period, on Lake Tillery in Stanley Co, NC, 20 Aug (Stuart Shelton). The passage of Hurricane Matthew deposited an adult female near the dam on J. Strom Thurmond Lake, McCormick Co, SC, 8 Oct (Blaine Carnes, Michael Rodgers), where it was seen and photographed by many through 21 Oct (Dennis Forsythe). The report from Lake Tillery is pending review by the NC BRC, while the other two reports have already been accepted by the state BRCs.

Anhinga: Farther inland than is typical for the species were individuals at Fants Grove WMA, Anderson Co, SC, 25 Jul (Kevin Kubach) through 15 Aug (m. obs.); at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, 18 Aug (Jeff Faircloth) through 21 Aug (Anthony Martin); and at Lake Betz, Wake Co, NC, 20 Aug (Lynn Erla Beegle, et al.). Individuals in Beaufort, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Oct (Martin Wall) and at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 12 Oct (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock) may have been displaced to those sites by the passage of Hurricane Matthew a few days earlier.

American White Pelican: Locally unusual was one in flight over Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, 25 Sep (Ryan Justice, John Connors, et al.); 40 over the southeast corner of Lake Murray, Lexington Co, SC, 23 Oct (Zach Steinhauser); and six over the Bogue Sound near Swansboro, Carteret Co, NC, 25 Oct (Sam Bland, et al.).

American Bittern: One photographed near Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 5 Sep (Sam Cooper) was somewhat early.

Least Bittern: A moribund individual found along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, during a period of high water following the passage of Hurricane Matthew, 9 Oct (John Fussell, Martha Mayo, Martin Wall) was rather late. Even later to depart were individuals at the south end of Bodie Island, Dare Co, NC, 22 Oct (Fussell, et al.) and at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, where photographed, 30 Oct (Tammy Hester).

Snowy Egret: Three in the Little Beaverdam Creek arm of Lake Hartwell, Anderson Co, SC, 1 Aug (Michael Robertson, Paul Serridge) were good finds for that inland site.

Little Blue Heron: An immature bird photographed at Trout Lake, Watauga Co, NC, 16 Aug (Beverly Saltonstall) was unusual for the mountain region.

Reddish Egret: Ten on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Sep (Jeff Kline, David McLean, Chris Snook) was a noteworthy count. Three on the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 21 Aug (John Fussell, Martha Mayo, Martin Wall) was a good count for NC. An immature bird seen on flats in North Topsail Beach, near New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, in August and September, lingered at that site until the late date of 28 Oct (Gilbert Grant). Another individual lingered on Bulls Island until 18 Nov (Kent Bedenbaugh, McLean).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: An immature bird seen at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 4 Oct (Vince Kloster) and 5 Oct (Kirk Gardner) was unusually late for a vagrant in the mountain region.

Glossy Ibis: Inland sightings included one at Archie Elledge WTP (limited access), Forsyth Co, NC, 2 Sep (David Disher, m. obs.) and two at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 2 Sep (Brian Murphy). Four at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 27 Nov (John Fussell, et al.) were somewhat late for a site in NC.

Roseate Spoonbill: A few of the higher counts made along the SC coast

were 23 on Dewees Island, Charleston Co, 23 Oct (Judy Fairchild); 36 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, 30 Oct (Carl & Cathy Miller); 14 at Pleasant Point Plantation, Beaufort Co, 30-31 Oct (Buddy Campbell); 12 at Yawkey Wildlife Center (restricted access), Georgetown Co, 8 Nov (Elizabeth Anderegg); and 40 at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, 24 Nov (David Youndblood). None were reported from NC during the period.

Swallow-tailed Kite: Post-breeding wanderers were seen at multiple sites in western NC again this August. Those sightings included up to two over fields near exit 75 on I-40 in McDowell Co, 7 Aug (Dwayne Martin) through 16 Aug (m. obs.); up to six near where NC-191 crosses the French Broad River in Henderson Co, 8 Aug (Wayne Forsythe) through 20 Aug (m. obs.); one where US-421 crosses Tick Creek in Chatham Co, 9 Aug (Susan Campbell); five in Marble, Cherokee Co, 14 Aug (George & Judy Halleron); up to nine over fields along Old State Highway 60 in eastern Wilkes Co, 16 Aug (Dale Reynolds) through 26 Aug (m. obs.); one along Max Patch Rd in Haywood Co, 16 Aug (Kirk Gardner); one along Paynes Dairy Rd in Alexander Co, 20 Aug (Doug Hochmuth); up to two along Cane Creek between Fairview and Fletcher, Buncombe Co, 22 Aug (Liz Payne) through 26 Aug (m. obs.); and one over US-64 near Pisgah Forest, Transylvania Co, 24 Aug (Jeff Beane, Gary Williamson). Six along Dorchester Rd in Anderson Co, SC, 20 Aug (Brad Dalton) were good finds for upstate SC.

Snail Kite: A first-year bird was seen and photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, 30 Nov (Michael Oliver) and 1 Dec (Anthony Martin, et al.). Leg bands showed that the kite had been banded just prior to fledging, 16 Jul 2016, near Fellsmere, Florida (fide Paul Serridge). Already accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting provides the second definitive record of Snail Kite in SC.

Mississippi Kite: Along with Swallow-tailed Kites, post-breeding Mississippi Kites also dispersed to sites in the NC foothills and mountains again this August. Most were immature birds in flight over agricultural fields, sometimes in the company of a smaller number of Swallow-tailed Kites. High counts included 30 over fields near exit 75 on I-40 in McDowell Co, 10 Aug (Dwayne Martin); five over Max Patch Rd in Haywood Co, 16 Aug (Kirk Gardner); six over fields along Old State Highway 60 in eastern Wilkes Co, 17 Aug (Dwayne Martin); 22 near where NC-191 crosses the French Broad River in Henderson Co, 22 Aug (Mike Judd); seven along Cane Creek between Fairview and Fletcher, Buncombe Co, 24 Aug (Tom Bush); and four over a farm along the Yadkin River in Caldwell Co, 3 Sep (Wilcox). Two over Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, 16 Aug (Yves Limpalair, Michael Robertson) were good finds for upstate SC. Hawk-watches reported four at Riverbend Park, Catawba Co, NC, 23 Aug (Dwayne Martin); one at Mahogany Rock, Alleghany Co, NC, 24 Sep (Richard Gray, et al.); and one at Caesar's Head SP, Greenville Co, SC, 24 Sep (Jerry Griggs, et al.).



Olive-sided Flycatcher, 27 Sept 2016, Rockingham Co, NC.
Photo by Martin Wall.

Broad-winged Hawk: The two highest counts from the NC mountains were 1136 over Grandfather Mountain, Avery Co, 23 Sep (Jesse Pope, et al.) and 2607 over a farm in northern Watauga Co, 28 Sep (Merrill Lynch). Three in flight over Patriot's Point, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Oct (Jack Rogers, et al.) were noteworthy for a site along the coast.

"Kridler's Hawk": Already accepted by the SC BRC was a photograph of this Red-tailed Hawk subspecies soaring where US-17 crosses the North Santee River in Georgetown Co, SC, 21 Nov (Stephen Thomas).

Golden Eagle: Individuals were seen over Roaring Creek Valley, Avery Co, NC, 6 Nov (Clifton Avery, Chris Kelly); at Caesar's Head SP, Greenville Co, SC, 7 Nov (Marion Clark, et al.); over Mount Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, NC, 7 Nov (Liz Payne); and over a farm in northern Watauga Co, NC, 11 Nov (Merrill Lynch).

Barn Owl: One flushed from a duck blind with a covered top at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 13 Aug (Steve Howell) may have been attempting to nest there.

Belted Kingfisher: One seen in flight over Carver's Gap at Roan Mountain, at about 5500 feet above sea level, Mitchell Co, NC, 8 Nov (Rick Knight) was unusual for that high elevation.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 30 at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, after



Least Flycatcher, 28 Nov 2016, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall.

the passage of a cold front, 23 Oct (John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy concentration of this less gregarious species.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Individuals were seen at West Branch Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 10 Sep (Rob Van Epps); on a farm along the Yadkin River in Caldwell Co, NC, where photographed, 17 Sep (Wilcox); in the Caswell Game Land, Caswell Co, NC, 25 Sep (Andrew Thornton); and along Old Anglin Loop in Rockingham Co, NC, where photographed, 26-27 Sep (Martin Wall).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: One was mist-netted, banded, and released at the Captain Sam's banding station on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Sep (Collette Lauzau, Alison Nevins, et al.).

Alder Flycatcher: A total of four were mist-netted, banded, and released at two banding stations on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, during the fall (Aaron Given, et al.). Also in Charleston Co, one was heard at Patriot's Point, 5 Oct (Jack Rogers).

Least Flycatcher: One photographed at Fort Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 28 Nov (Martin Wall) was extremely late.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One photographed near the intersection of Long Curve Rd and Link Rd at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 26 Nov (Sheree Davis, Brian Murphy, et al.) was never re-found.

Western Kingbird: Individuals were seen and photographed at Airlie Gardens, New Hanover Co, NC, 25 Sep (Sam Cooper); at the Ft Fisher Ferry Terminal, New Hanover Co, NC, 3-6 Oct (John Ennis, m. obs.); and in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 31 Oct (Matt Johnson).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One photographed at Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 21 Nov (Darwin Evangelista) was a great find and somewhat late compared to most fall sightings made in the Carolinas in years past.

Bell's Vireo: An amazing total of three Bell's Vireos were mist-netted, banded, and released at the two banding stations on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, this fall. Individuals were banded there 5 Sep, 12 Sep, and 30 Sep (Aaron Given, et al.). Another individual was mist-netted, banded, and released at a banding station on Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, 21 Sep (Sarah Diaz, Kristen Oliver, Jennifer Tyrrell, et al.).

Philadelphia Vireo: This species was well-reported this fall. Sightings began in mid-September, peaked during the last week of September, and began trickling off in early October. A few of the higher counts were three in the Caswell Game Land, Caswell Co, NC, 25 Sep (Andrew Thornton); three along Poplar Lane in Transylvania Co, NC, 25 Sep (Mike Judd, et al.) and 27 Sep (Claire Herzog, et al.); four at Snowbird Mountain Lodge in Graham Co, NC, 27 Sep (Aaron Steed, et al.); and three at Jackson Park, Henderson Co, NC, 30 Sep (Simon Harvey). One near Irmo, Lexington Co, 11 Oct (Jerry Griggs) was the latest reported in SC, while one at Mason Farm, Orange Co, 18 Oct (Jan Hansen) was latest reported in NC.

Warbling Vireo: An individual photographed in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, 6 Sep (Michael Gosselin) and individuals mist-netted, banded, and released on the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 17 Sep and 27 Sep (Michael Gamble, et al.) were great finds for those sites along the coast.

Red-eyed Vireo: One in Manteo, Dare Co, NC, 29 Oct (Jeff Lewis) was somewhat late.

Yellow-green Vireo: The fall's most exciting discovery was that of a Yellow-green Vireo mist-netted, banded, and released on the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 27 Sep (Aaron Given, et al.). Interestingly, this individual was originally mist-netted 22 Sep, but misidentified as a Red-eyed Vireo. Luckily it was recaptured five days later, when it was correctly identified. Already accepted by the SC BRC, this sighting provides the first record of this tropical vireo in the Carolinas, and only the second record for the eastern United States north of the Florida panhandle!

Common Raven: At about the eastern limit of the species' range were multiple sightings of individuals in an area surrounding the quarry along US-1 between north Raleigh and Wake Forest, Wake Co, NC, in October and November (m. obs.). Also noteworthy were pairs where US-1 crosses US-421 in Lee Co, NC, 29 Aug (Parker Backstrom); where US-70 crosses Lynn Rd in Wake Co, NC, 8 Sep (Brian Murphy); and where US-1 crosses Pea Ridge Rd

in Chatham Co, NC, 7 Nov (Backstrom).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Two photographed at Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, 21 Nov (Jesse Anderson) were quite late, especially for a site so far inland.

Cave Swallow: One seen along the Pitt St Causeway, Charleston Co, SC, 23 Oct (Nancy Dodge, Carlos Sanchez, et al.) was somewhat early. Other sightings included one at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 13 Nov (John Fussell, et al.); two on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 14 Nov (David Gardner, Justin Johnson); one along the Pitt St Causeway, 15 Nov (Caroline Eastman); one on the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 16 Nov (Blaine Carnes); and one at Lockwood Folly Inlet, Brunswick Co, NC, 26 Nov (Ricky Davis).

Barn Swallow: One at Lockwood Folly Inlet, Brunswick Co, NC, 26 Nov (Ricky Davis) was somewhat late.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: One at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 24 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) was early. At other sites outside the mountains, this species began showing up in mid-September, and was well-reported across the Carolinas in October. Eight at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, after the passage of a cold front, 23 Oct (John Fussell, et al.) was a good count.

Sedge Wren: Individuals photographed at two sites in Boone, Watauga Co, NC, along the Boone Greenway, 27 Sep (Wilcox) and at Brookshire Park, 8 Oct (Wilcox), were good finds for the mountain region.

Wood Thrush: One lingered in a yard eating Beautyberries in Mecklenburg Co, NC, where photographed, until the late date of 4 Nov (Will Stuart).

Gray Catbird: 100 at Patriot's Point, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Oct (Ed Blitch, Jack Rogers) and 70 at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, after the passage of a cold front, 23 Oct (John Fussell, et al.) were nice concentrations of migrants.

Purple Finch: This species began to arrive in mid-October, and was seen at multiple sites across the Piedmont and mountain region by the end of the period.

Lapland Longspur: Individuals were seen at the southern tip of Bodie Island, Dare Co, NC, where photographed, 21 Oct (Mike Stewart, et al.); next to the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, Dare Co, NC, 2 Nov (Skip Hancock, Linda Ward); and at Lockwood Folly Inlet, Brunswick Co, NC, 26 Nov (Ricky Davis).

Snow Bunting: Two were photographed at the Harkers Island Visitor Center, Carteret Co, NC, 8 Nov (David & Susan Disher, Marbry Hopkins).

Louisiana Waterthrush: One photographed along the Cottonwood Trail in Spartanburg Co, SC, 8 Sep (Michael Robertson) was somewhat late to depart.

Golden-winged Warbler: Individuals photographed at Patriot's Point, Charleston Co, SC, 21 Sep (Keith McCullough) and along Burnt Mill Creek in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 4 Oct (Jamie Adams) were good finds for those sites so near the coast.

“Lawrence’s Warbler”: One was photographed at Jackson Park, Henderson Co, NC, 6 Oct (Simon Thompson, et al.).

Black-and-white Warbler: Six responding to playback around the golf course in Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 28 Nov (John Fussell) was a good count for that date.

Nashville Warbler: Individuals photographed in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Nov (Sam Cooper) and at Caw Caw Interpretive Center, Charleston Co, SC, 19 Nov (Keith McCullough, et al.) were quite late.

Connecticut Warbler: One found at Schenck Forest, Wake Co, NC, 2 Oct (Lucas Bobay) was seen and photographed by many through 5 Oct (m. obs.).

Mourning Warbler: Individuals were seen in northern Watauga Co, NC, 10 Sep (Merrill Lynch); at the banding station on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 12 Sep (Aaron Given, et al.); at the upper end of Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 17-18 Sep (Ricky Davis, Geoff LeBaron, m. obs.); and along Burnt Mill Creek in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 19 Sep (David Weesner).

Kirtland’s Warbler: An immature Kirtland’s Warbler was photographed at the Ridge Junction Overlook, along the BRP in Yancey Co, NC, 28 Sep (Simon Thompson, et al.). The report was reviewed and accepted by the NC BRC, providing NC with its sixth documented record. A report of a Kirtland’s Warbler in Camden, Kershaw Co, SC, 17 Oct (Steve Patterson) is pending review by the SC BRC.

Cerulean Warbler: A singing male put on a show at Historic Bethabara Park, Forsyth Co, NC, 19 Aug (Marbry Hopkins) through 26 Aug (m. obs.).

Northern Parula: One photographed in Waves, Dare Co, NC, 12 Nov (Karen Lebing) was somewhat late to depart.

Magnolia Warbler: Quite late to depart were individuals seen and photographed at Beaver Lake, Buncombe Co, NC, 7-25 Nov (Jay Wherley, m. obs.) and at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 27 Nov (Scott Davis, Brian Murphy).

Blackburnian Warbler: One photographed in Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC, 2 Nov (Karen Hogan) was late to depart.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Individuals photographed at Cherry Farm, Pickens Co, SC, an adult male, 4 Nov (Kevin Kubach) and just west of Clover, York Co, SC, an adult female, 11 Nov (Steven Biggers) were somewhat late to depart, while an adult female seen at Magnolia Gardens, Charleston Co, SC, 20 Nov (Ed Blitch, Ray Swagerty) was quite late to depart.

Yellow-throated Warbler: One in Concord, Cabarrus Co, NC, 3 Nov (Jan Fowler) was late for a site in the Piedmont.

Prairie Warbler: Individuals lingered at the west end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 25 Nov (John Fussell); at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 25 Nov (Scott Davis, Brian Murphy); and at the “sparrow field” on the west side of Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, 27 Nov (Ed Corey).

Wilson’s Warbler: One on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, NC, 17 Oct (Jeff

Lewis) was somewhat late. One seen where Bowdens Rd crosses Nahunga Creek in Duplin Co, NC, 26 Nov (Erik Thomas) may have been attempting to over-winter in that area.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Individuals lingered along Old Sanders Drive in Horry Co, SC, 24 Nov (Joe Gyekis) and in Emerald Isle, Carteret Co, NC, 24 Nov (John Hammond).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Individuals were seen in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 24 Sep (Irvin Pitts); in Waves, Dare Co, NC, 25-28 Sep (Karen Lebing); at Mingo Point, Charleston Co, SC, 30 Sep (Jake Zadik, et al.); in Waves, 4 Oct (Lebing); at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 15 Oct (Sam Cooper); and at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, after the passage of a cold front, 23 Oct (John Fussell). One photographed along the Boone Greenway, Watauga Co, NC, 16 Oct (Wilcox) was an especially good find for the mountain region.

Vesper Sparrow: One seen photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, 17 Nov (Michael Robertson) was a first for that park.

Lark Sparrow: One photographed at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 2 Sep (Claire Herzog, et al.) was a great find for the mountain region. Along the coast, where this species is more likely to be found, individuals were seen at the Seabrook Island Equestrian Center, Charleston Co, SC, 11 Sep (Aija Konrad, m. obs.); near the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 27 Sep (Michael Gosselin); at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 28 Sep (Hugh Powell); on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, NC, 3 Oct (Jeff Lewis); at the Cape Point Campground, Dare Co, NC, 3 Oct (Gosselin); and at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 15-16 Oct (Thomas Doebel, m. obs.).

Fox Sparrow: One seen along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, NC, 19 Oct (Andrew Thornton) was early.

Lincoln's Sparrow: After arriving in our region in late September, Lincoln's Sparrows were seen at dozens of sites in the mountains and northern Piedmont of NC in October. Possible county firsts were seen in Ashe Co, 25 Sep (Ricky Davis); in Surry Co, 26 Oct (Jesse Anderson); and in Stokes Co, 26 Oct (Anderson). Six at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, 16 Oct (Wilcox) was the highest count. One photographed at Yates Mill County Park, Wake Co, NC, 2 Nov (Robert Oberfelder) was a good find for the Triangle area. One just north of Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 19 Nov (Sam Cooper) was one of the few sightings made in the coastal plain. In SC, one photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, 26 Oct (Jo Anne Keasler) was a first for that park.

White-crowned Sparrow: An adult seen along the BRP at Doughton Park in Alleghany Co, NC, 25 Sep (Ricky Davis) was somewhat early.

Western Tanager: A first-year male photographed in a yard in northern Charlotte, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 26 Nov (Molly Redmond, Barry Rowan) was not seen again.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 550 migrants in flight over Balsam Gap, along the BRP in northeastern Buncombe Co, NC, 21 Sep (Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal) was a remarkable count. One photographed at a feeder in Rutherfordton, Rutherford Co, NC, 10 Nov (Lacy & Russell Johnson) was somewhat late to depart.

Black-headed Grosbeak: Already reviewed and accepted by the NC BRC was the report of an adult male Black-headed Grosbeak photographed in a yard in Weddington, Union Co, NC, 22 Nov (Peter Quadarella). This sighting provided the 12th record for NC, and the first since 2007.

Dickcissel: There were about a dozen sightings in the Carolinas this fall, most of which were made along the coast in October and early November. One photographed at Valle Crucis Community Park, Watauga Co, NC, 17 Oct (Sam Cooper) was a good find for the mountain region. One lingered at Mason Farm Biological Reserve, Orange Co, NC, 13 Nov (Clare Gyorke, Jelmer Poelstra) through 20 Nov (Neil Skoog).

Bobolink: 3700+ in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Aug (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock) was a noteworthy count. One photographed just north of Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Nov (Sam Cooper) was very late.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Individuals were seen at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 10 Sep (Mike Judd) and over the Crow Hill Hunting Club, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Nov (Clancy Ballenger).

Brewer's Blackbird: Five were seen along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 29 Nov (Wayne Forsythe) through 1 Dec (m. obs.).



Bobolink, 19 Nov 2016, New Hanover Co, NC. Photo by Sam Cooper.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes. Pay dues or make donations at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/>. Make change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile/>. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at <http://www.carolinabirdclub.org/about.html>. Dues include \$6 for subscription to the *CBC Newsletter* and \$7 for subscription to *The Chat*.

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Student.....	\$15.00
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The Chat

Quarterly Bulletin of Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pinehurst, NC 28374 and
additional mailing offices

The Chat

Vol. 81

SPRING 2017

No. 2



The Quarterly Bulletin of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
The Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

THE CHAT

ISSN No. 0009-1987

Vol. 81

SPRING 2017

No. 2

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THE CHAT is published quarterly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612. Individual subscription price \$25 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Pinehurst, NC and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE CHAT, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374.

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2016 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

Chris Hill¹, Chair, Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Keith McCullough, William Post, Steve Wagner

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In 2016, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee took action on 19 new reports, of which 18 were accepted and 1 not accepted. All accepted records received unanimous support from the committee. One additional report was withdrawn by the submitter. Two accepted reports from early 2016, of Thayer's Gull and Scott's Oriole, were published with the 2015 report and are not addressed further here.

The accepted records detailed below add one species to South Carolina's Main Species List: Yellow-green Vireo. The Main Species list currently stands at 434 species. The most recent version of the list is available online at <http://carolinabirdclub.org/brc>. Also at that site is a list of reports the committee is currently considering, and ones for which we have recently voted.

Simon Harvey joined the committee in 2016. Other than that committee membership was unchanged.

Below we detail actions taken by the SC Bird Records Committee in 2016.

Accepted reports

Brant (*Branta bernicla*) (2016-003). Lex Glover submitted a written report of a Brant seen 17 December 2016 on South Island at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center in Georgetown County during the Winyah Bay Christmas Bird Count. The report was accepted unanimously. Brant are rare winter visitors to the South Carolina coast.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (2 reports: 2016-004 and 2016-005). David McLean submitted a report with a photograph of this species at Bull Island, Charleston County on 3 January 2016. The committee also accepted two reports of a bird in the ocean at Botany Bay WMA, Beaufort County. David Youngblood found the bird on 27 January 2016 and submitted a report with a clear photograph. Pam Ford relocated the bird on 31 January 2016 and submitted a written description. A possible second individual at Botany Bay on 27 January was not confirmed.

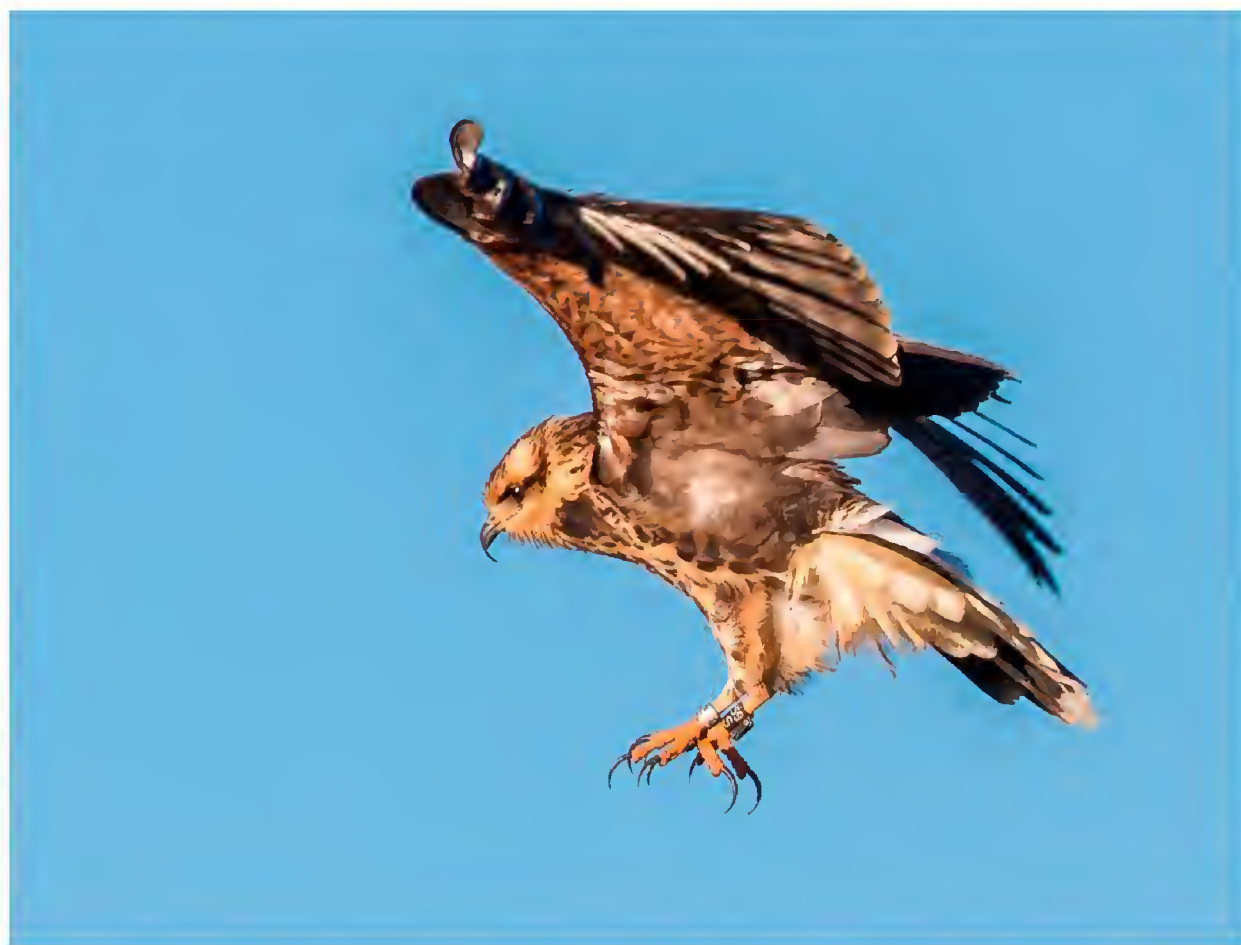
Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) (2016-011) Michael Robertson submitted a report with 3 photographs of a bird at the Huntington Beach State Park jetty, Georgetown County, on 27 November 2016. The report was supplemented by a fourth photo from Pam Ford. The bird remained in the area

for several weeks and was seen by many birders. The last report to eBird was on 5 January 2017.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) (2016-009). Lois Stacey filed a report of a Brown Booby seen at Clark's Hill Dam on Strom Thurmond Lake on 9 October 2016. The report included an excellent description and definitive photos of the bird in flight. This bird was likely blown off course as a result of Hurricane Matthew that made landfall in South Carolina on 8 October 2016.

Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (2016-017). Very surprising was South Carolina's second record of Snail Kite, seen and well photographed on 30 November 2016, and seen briefly the next morning, on 1 December 2016 at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville County. Paul Serridge filed a report supplemented with excellent photos by Anthony Martin. The juvenal plumaged bird was wearing a field-readable alphanumeric band, and the photos showed the complete code. Tyler Beck, Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission forwarded the history of that bird, which had been "banded just prior to fledging on 16 July 2016 in a private mitigation wetland near Fellsmere, FL."

Red-tailed Hawk (Krider's) (*Buteo jamaicensis kriderii*) (2016-012). Stephen R. Thomas sent the committee two photographs and a report of a flyover Red-tailed Hawk near Doar Plantation in Georgetown County on 21



Immature Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville County, SC, 1 December 2016. Photo by Anthony Q. Martin.

November 2016. The committee agreed unanimously that this individual was a Krider's Red-tailed Hawk, a subspecies that nests on northern plains and prairies in the north-central U.S. and adjacent Canada. This subspecies is rarely documented on the East Coast.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) (2016-007). Aaron Given reported a Burrowing Owl that wintered at Kiawah Island, Charleston County (seen from 25 January to 5 March 2016). Some committee members attempted to determine whether the individual was of the Florida population or the subspecies from the western U.S. but as a whole the committee reached no firm conclusion on that.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) (4 accepted reports: 2016-013, 2016-014, 2016-015, 2016-018). Although Bell's Vireo was practically unrecorded in South Carolina until recently, the recipe for finding one is clear – operate a fall banding station on the coast near Charleston. This year Aaron Given of the Kiawah Island Banding Station contributed three more records, of birds banded on 5, 12, and 30 September. A newer fall banding station on Sullivan's Island contributed a fourth record, from 21 September, reported and with photos by Jennifer Tyrell. Even at the banding sites, Bell's Vireos are seldom if ever detected unless they are captured.

Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) (2016-008). New for South Carolina. Blaine Harris Carnes reported this species, from the Kiawah Island Banding Station, with diagnostic measurements and photographs. As recounted in a blog post at the banding station website, Carnes actually had the bird in hand on 22 September 2016 and due to a mistaken measurement, he misidentified it as a bright Red-eyed Vireo and released it, despite having handled many Yellow-green Vireos in Central and South America. Once he released it, Carnes realized his error. After 5 tense days, the vireo was recaptured on 27 September, and this time measured properly and photographed to document the new species for South Carolina that almost got away. Yellow-green Vireos breed from Mexico to Panama, rarely to south Texas. They are migratory, and regularly stray to the California coast in fall, also straying to the Gulf coast states including Florida. The only previous record on the Atlantic coast north of Florida that the committee is aware of is a bird banded September 2011 in Massachusetts. (Flemer et al. 2011).

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) (2016-019). Scarce even in migration, a Golden-winged Warbler in February is unprecedented in South Carolina. Keith McCullough provided a report with photographs of this bird, seen by many at Caw Caw Interpretive Center in Charleston County, found 6 February and continuing through 21 February (D. Forsythe pers. comm.).

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*) (2016-016). Aaron Given submitted a report with definitive photographs of a hatch-year Mourning Warbler banded at the Kiawah Island Banding Station on 12 September 2016.

Non-accepted reports

Masked Duck (*Nomonyx dominicus*) (2016-010). This intriguing report, of a bird at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge on 22 November 1973, received 2 votes to accept and 6 votes of inadequate documentation. The report came from field notes of long time Augusta, Georgia birder Anne Waters. Lois Stacey came across this report while transcribing these notes and entering unusual sightings into eBird. The field notes submitted to the committee showed an excellent sketch of a *Nomonyx* duck with a dark cap and two horizontal dark stripes on a paler cheek. However, it seemed likely that the sketch was done after the sighting, not during it, and most voters had too many concerns about the lack of details (actions of the bird, specific habitat) to vote in favor.

Acknowledgements

The committee thanks all the observers who submitted reports, and those who encouraged others to submit reports. Your actions increase our understanding of bird occurrence in the state.

Literature Cited

Flemer, B., W.O. Gette, and D.M. Larson. 2011. Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis* banded at Plum Island, Massachusetts. Bird Observer. 39:5.

General Field Notes

General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.

First Record of Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) for South Carolina

Blaine H. Carnes, Aaron Given

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On 22 September and 27 September 2016, Blaine H. Carnes, Michael Gamble, Ryan Donnelly, Collette Lauzau, and Allison Nevins captured a Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) on Kiawah Island, South Carolina. The bird was captured in a mist-net as part of an ongoing study monitoring songbird migration during the fall. Fall migration banding occurs on Kiawah Island at two locations: the Captain Sam's banding site since 2009, and the Little Bear banding site since 2015. The Yellow-green Vireo was captured at the Little Bear banding site which is located at the far eastern end of Kiawah Island. At Little Bear, 20 permanent 12-m mist-nets placed in maritime scrub-shrub are operated daily from 22 August through 17 November. Nets are opened approximately 30 min before sunrise and remain open for 5-6 hours, weather permitting.

On 22 September the bird was captured and banded at approximately 11:10 AM EST in net #2, which is located within scrub-shrub. Vegetation surrounding the net consists primarily of Marsh-Elder (*Iva frutescens*) and Cabbage Palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*) from 7-12 ft in height. On 27 September the bird was recaptured at approximately 10:25 AM EST in net #16, which is located on an old dune ridge. Vegetation surrounding the net consists of Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) up to 15 ft in height with a dense thicket of brier (*Smilax sp.*). On both occasions the bird was placed in a cloth bag and brought back to the banding station within ten minutes.

Description of the Bird

The bird resembled a very brightly colored Red-eyed Vireo, with vivid yellow along the flanks, undertail coverts, underwing coverts, vent, and breast (Fig. 1). The cap was a paler gray than in Red-eyed Vireo, without dark edging,



Figure 1. Yellow-green Vireo recaptured on Kiawah Island, SC on 27 September 2016.

and the upper mandible appeared paler than in Red-eyed Vireo.

The bird had a molt limit within the alula (A1 had been replaced, with A2 and A3 retained) and the eye was brownish, which indicated a hatch-year bird. A small amount of subcutaneous fat was recorded in the furcular region (fat score = 1) on the original capture date, which had slightly increased by the recapture date (fat score = 2). Morphological measurements recorded included: wing chord was 73.0 mm; exposed culmen was 15.2 mm; the difference between the length of the 9th primary and the 5th primary was 2 mm; mass was 13.7 g at original capture and 18.9 g upon recapture.

Identification

Bright yellow coloration. This individual exhibited much brighter yellow coloration than shown by even the brightest Red-eyed Vireos, especially on the breast, underwing coverts, flanks, and undertail coverts (Fig. 2-3).

Exposed culmen measurement. This individual had an exposed culmen measurement of 15.2 mm, well outside the maximum length found in Red-eyed Vireos of 13.6 mm (Fig. 4) (Pyle 1997).

Wing morphology. There is very little overlap between Red-eyed and Yellow-green Vireos in the closed-wing measurement of the difference between the length of the 9th primary feather and the 5th primary feather, with



Figure 2. Close up of underwing coverts, flanks, and undertail coverts.



Figure 3. Comparison with Red-eyed Vireo of the same age.



Figure 4. Exposed culmen measurement. Figure 5. Difference between the length of the 9th primary and the 5th primary.

Red-eyed Vireo showing a range of 4-8 mm and Yellow-green Vireo showing a range of 1-5 mm (Pyle 1997). This individual had a P9-P5 measurement of 2 mm (Fig. 5).

Conclusion

The photos and description noted above describe South Carolina's first Yellow-green Vireo. Of the two similar North American species, Black-whiskered Vireo can be ruled out by that species' much duller coloration and dark lateral throat stripe. Red-eyed Vireo can be ruled out by coloration and by bill and wing measurements.

Based on the above diagnostic photos and description, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee accepted this record as the first Yellow-green Vireo in South Carolina (Hill et al. 2017). There have been other vagrant records of this species in North America, mostly in western states such as California, Arizona, Nevada, and the Canadian province of British Columbia, which most likely pertain to the *V.f.hypoleucus* subspecies, which breeds in western Mexico. In the east this species has appeared out of range along the Gulf Coast in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida, in the Florida Keys and south Florida, and one individual captured and banded in Massachusetts in September 2011 (Flemer et al. 2011).

It is likely that this bird is an example of a misoriented reverse-migrant (Howell et al. 2014). In this phenomenon, a bird's internal compass is wrong, causing it to migrate the wrong way, often on a 90-degree or 180-degree track from their species' typical migration path. Yellow-green Vireo has a breeding range that extends from the west and east coast of Mexico down through Central America to Panama and a wintering range in Amazonia, mainly along the base of the east slope of the Andes (Rodríguez-Flores et al. 2010), with a migration route that theoretically runs from northwest to southeast through Central America.

By measurements and coloration, the Kiawah Island bird was not from the hypoleucus subspecies that breeds in west Mexico (Pyle 1997), and seems most likely to be of the nominate flavoviridis subspecies, found along the east slope of Mexico up to far south Texas.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Town of Kiawah Island and the Kiawah Island Conservancy for providing financial support to the Kiawah Island banding Station. We would also like to thank the Bear Island Holding Trust and the Kiawah Island Golf Resort for providing access to the Little Bear Island to band birds. We would like to thank all of the banding technicians (Mattie VandenBoom, Ryan Donnelly, Michael Gamble, Collette Lauzau, Allison Nevins, and Michael Rodgers) for all their hard work throughout the season.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates WINTER 2016-2017, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1 - February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1 - May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1 - July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1 - November 30	due December 20

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Reports published herein may include sightings that require review by the state bird record's committee. Such reports are not considered accepted records until, and unless, they are so ruled by the committee.

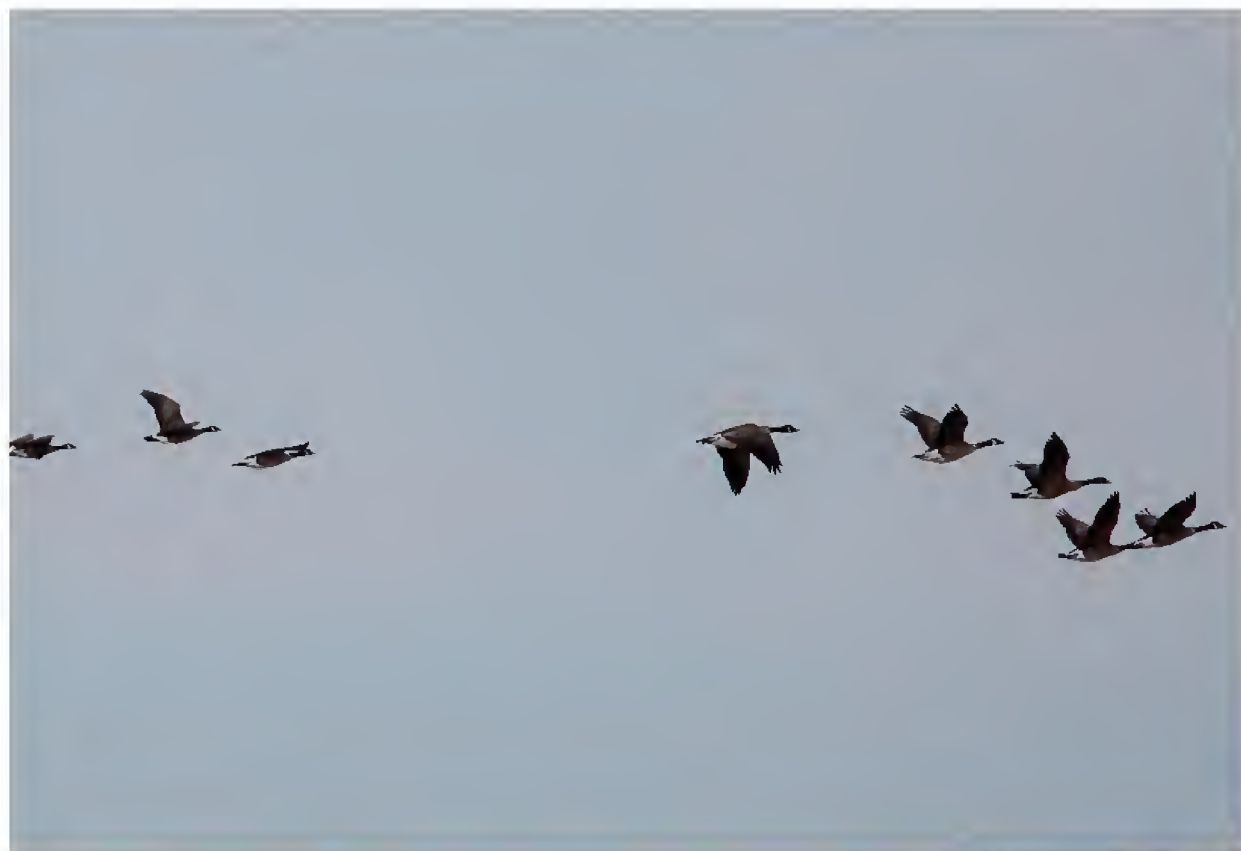
Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **Co** – County, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NF** – National Forest, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: 18 photographed at a pond in Barnwell Co, SC, 18-19 Feb (Ed Peachey) were unusual for that area. Peachey noted that, according to the landowner, the ducks had been present for most of the winter.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Sightings made in NC included two at multiple sites around Swannanoa, Buncombe Co, 17 Dec (Denise Hargrove) through 17 Feb (Ryan Lubbers); up to five at the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, 6 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.) through 15 Jan (m. obs.); four in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, 27 Jan (Matt Daw, et al.); 17 at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, 1-7 Feb (Michael Plauché); two on Lake Wilson, Wilson Co, 17 Feb (Ann Brice); and five at the Pungo Unit, 26 Feb (Ricky Davis). Sightings made in SC included seven at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 19 Dec (Scott Davis); five at Fountain Lake in Richland Co, 29 Dec (John Grego) through 31 Jan (m. obs.); up to 12 in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, 21 Dec (Brad Dalton, Jack Rogers, et al.) through 7 Feb (m. obs.); and three at Dobbins Farm, 26 Feb (Jeff Click).

Snow Goose: Sightings made in the NC mountains included eight, including four dark-morph geese, at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, 4 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); one on Osceola Lake, Henderson Co, 11 Dec (Marilyn Westphal) into spring (m. obs.); two on Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 24 Dec and 13 Jan (Michael Plauché); and seven along the French Broad River in Woodfin, Buncombe Co, NC, 26 Dec (Doug Johnston). Good for upstate SC were four dark-morph geese at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 22 Dec (Simon Harvey, et al.) through 28 Dec (Kevin Kubach) and three at the Clemson Aquaculture Facility, Pickens Co, 2-4 Jan (Scott Davis, m. obs.).

Ross's Goose: The trend in recent years of an increased number of sightings continued this winter. Note that almost all sightings involved birds associating with flocks of Canada Geese. Ten in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, 14 Jan (Lucas Bobay, et al.) was our region's high count. Other sightings made in the NC coastal plain included one at the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, 10 Dec (Bobay, et al.) and 28 Dec (Jack Rogers, et al.); two in the Pungo Unit, 23 Dec (Ricky Davis); two at the Beasley Rd pond, 6 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.); one at Veterans Park, New Hanover Co, 15-18 Jan (Jamie Adams, m. obs.); and two at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, 29 Jan (Rogers, et al.). Four at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 4 Dec (Wayne Forsythe) was a record count for the mountain region, while four along Mid-Pines Rd in Wake Co, 1 Jan (Steve Shultz) was a great count for the Piedmont. Other sightings made in mountains and Piedmont of NC included one near Piedmont Triad International Airport, Guilford Co, 12-24 Dec (Rachel Milewski, m. obs.); one along Mebane Bridge Rd in Rockingham Co, 1-2 Jan (Martin Wall); one at a pond in Granite Falls, Caldwell Co, 4 Jan (Dwayne Martin); one along Shotwell Rd in Johnston Co, 5 Jan (Clyde Sorenson); one at Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, 5-6 Jan (Michael Plauché); and two at a pond along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, 29 Jan (Elizabeth &



Cackling and Canada Geese, 10 Jan 2017, Washington Co, NC.
Photo by Martin Wall.

Henry Link). Sightings made in SC included two on Lake Hartwell in Pickens Co, 22 Dec (Kevin Kubach); two at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 9 Jan (Paul Serridge, et al.); up to three in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, 5 Jan (Tom Austin) through 25 Jan (Peter Stangel); and one on Fountain Lake, Richland Co, 13-31 Jan (Steve McInnis, m. obs.).

Brant: 650 seen from the Hatteras to Ocracoke Ferry at Hatteras Inlet, border of Dare Co and Hyde Co, NC, 26 Jan (Matt Janson, Martina Nordstrand, Jack Rogers) was a remarkable count.

Cackling Goose: Around the pond where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd in Washington Co, NC, after one was first seen 13 Dec (Audrey Whitlock), four were seen 28 Dec (Jack Rogers, et al.), and a high count of seven was made there 6 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.).

Five were also seen at a nearby site, a pond along US-64 just east of Creswell, Washington Co, NC, 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis). In the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, after four were first seen 23 Jan (Dave Minnich, et al.), an astounding count of 24 was made there 5 Feb (Corey), and at least 20 remained on 26 Feb (Carter, Davis). One photographed at the Lincolnton WTP, Lincoln Co, NC, 4 Jan (Dwayne Martin) was a first for that county.

Mute Swan: One seen amongst Tundra Swans at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 1 Jan (Carl & Cathy Miller) into spring (m. obs.) may have been of wild origin.

Trumpeter Swan: In the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, after one was first seen and heard 10 Dec (Jeff Beane, Ed Corey, et al.), two were seen there 23 Dec (Ricky Davis), a high count of three was made 14 Jan (Lucas Bobay, et al.), and at least one remained through 11 Feb (Phil Doerr, et al.). Pending review by the NC BRC was the report of a sub-adult Trumpeter Swan on the French Broad River near Alexander, Buncombe Co, NC, 25 Dec (Jay Wherley) through 27 Mar (Greg Massey). If accepted, it would be the first record of this species in the mountain region.

Tundra Swan: 18776 on the Pettigrew SP CBC, 27 Dec (fide Charlotte Davis) and 18413 on the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell) were, by far, the two highest totals of all the 2016 Audubon CBCs. One photographed along Watauga River Rd in Watauga Co, NC, 19 Dec (Steve Dowlan) was a good find for the mountain region. 220 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 11 Feb (Lewis Burke, Roger Smith) was a good count for a site so far south.

Eurasian Wigeon: Individual drakes were seen on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 9 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Mike Stewart, et al.) through 20 Jan (Eubank) and at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Edmund LeGrand, Harry LeGrand) and again 27 Jan (Mike McCloy, et al.) through 5 Feb (Ricky Davis). One seen feeding with American Wigeons in a field along Canal D Rd in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, border of Hyde Co and Washington Co, NC, 5 Feb (Ed Corey) was a first for that site. Up to two were seen at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 1 Jan (Lacy & Russell Johnson, et al.) through 22 Feb (m. obs.).

American x Eurasian Wigeon: An apparent hybrid of an American Wigeon and a Eurasian Wigeon was photographed at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Jan (Kent Fiala, et al.).

Mottled Duck: In NC, where this species is still rare, individuals were seen on a pond in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, 29 Dec (Mark Jones, m. obs.) and at Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal (restricted access), Brunswick Co, during the Southport CBC, 1 Jan (Sam Cooper, Jones, et al.).

Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal: An apparent hybrid of a Blue-winged Teal and a Cinnamon Teal, originally identified as a pure Cinnamon Teal, was seen and photographed at Santee Coastal Reserve WMA, Charleston Co, SC, 18 Feb (Chris Davies) through 23 Feb (m. obs.).

Redhead: High counts were 10,000 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan (Susan Campbell) and 27 Jan (Kent Fiala, et al.) and 10,000 over the Core Sound near Ophelia Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Jeff Lemons, et al.)

Ring-necked Duck: 11,000 counted on the Congaree Swamp CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Grego) was a record number for that count and the highest total of any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Greater Scaup: 4500 in Stumpy Point Bay, Dare Co, NC, 30 Dec (Jay Ross) was an amazing count for our region.



Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal, 21 Feb 2017, Charleston Co, SC.

Photo by Matt Johnson.

Common Eider: Around the pilings of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, after a first-winter drake was first seen 8 Dec (Loren Hintz); three eiders were seen 11 Dec (Jeff Lewis); high counts of four were made 16 Dec (Bobby Koch) and 18 Dec (Lee Adams, Audrey Whitlock); and a hen continued to 7 Mar (Alan MacEachren). Twelve, including four adult drakes, in flight off the end of Jennette's Pier, 16 Jan (Michael Gosselin) was an amazing number for the Carolinas. Elsewhere along the NC coast, sightings included a hen around the pilings of Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, 7-10 Dec (James Parnell, m. obs.); a hen at Oyster Creek near Davis, Carteret Co, 7 Dec (Chandra Biggerstaff) and 9 Dec (Martin Wall); two hens in a line of scoters off Kitty Hawk, Dare Co, during its CBC, 17 Dec (Ricky Davis); two, a first-winter drake and a hen, at Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, 20 Dec (Jim Gould); a hen around the pilings of the Kure Beach Pier, New Hanover Co, 28 Dec (Jurek Smykla) through 7 Jan (Brad Carlson); two, a first-winter drake and a hen, at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, 31 Dec (Jeff Pippen, Sam Cooper, et al.) through 24 Mar (Natalie Barbour, et al.); and a first-winter drake in south Topsail Beach, Pender Co, 18 Feb (Henry Link, et al.). Around the jetties at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, after a hen was first seen 7 Dec (Irvin Pitts, et al.); as many as three eiders, including a first-winter drake, were seen there 28 Dec (Peter Stangel) through 19 Feb (Roger Smith). Elsewhere along the SC coast, sightings included one off Cherry Grove Fishing Pier, Horry Co, 27 Dec (Mike Turner); two, a first-winter drake and a hen, off Shem Creek Park, Charleston Co, 13 Jan (Elizabeth Anderegg) with the first-winter drake continuing through 5 Feb (m. obs.); and two hens around the pilings of the Garden City Pier, Horry Co, 20 Jan (Frank Lawkins) and 22 Jan (Paul



Common Eider, 11 Dec 2016, Dare Co, NC.
Photo by Jeff Lewis.

Serridge).

Harlequin Duck: Sightings, all made in NC, included two off of Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, 23 Dec (Sam Cooper); one in flight off of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, 28 Jan (Derb Carter); and two, a drake and a hen, off the Coquina rock outcrops at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, 10 Feb (Mark Jones) and the nearby Kure Beach Pier, through 19 Feb (Ricky Davis). Also, a duck hunter reportedly shot a hen in the Bogue Sound near Salter Path, Carteret Co, in mid-January (fide John Fussell).

Surf Scoter: Sightings made on inland lakes included a hen on Thagards Lake, Moore Co, NC, 5 Dec (Susan Campbell); a hen on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 6 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); four on Oak Hollow Lake, Guilford Co, NC, 4 Jan (Andrew Thornton); and two drakes on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 12 Feb (Thornton).

White-winged Scoter: Two on Lake Keowee, Oconee Co, SC, during the Keowee CBC, 2 Jan (Stephen Schutt, et al.) and one on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, SC, during its CBC, 2 Jan (Lex Glover) were the only reports from inland lakes this winter.

Black Scoter: Five on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, SC, during its CBC, 2 Jan (Lex Glover) was a nice total for an inland lake.

Long-tailed Duck: Three, one drake and two hens, photographed on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes Co, NC, 4 Dec (Jesse Anderson), and also a hen seen on Ecusta Pond, Transylvania Co, NC, 11 Dec (Michael Plauché), were good finds for western NC. Five at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 29 Dec (Tom Austin, Ed Blitch) was a good count for a site in SC. A hen photographed off Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 10

Dec (Mark Vukovich) was a good find for a site so far south.

Common Goldeneye: This species was well-reported again this winter. Nine, three drakes and six hens, on the Cape Fear River off the Ft Fisher Air Force Recreation Area, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Jan (Ricky Davis, Jeff Phippen) was a notable count.

Common Merganser: 520 on the north end of Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, 15 Jan (Ricky Davis) was our region's high count. Two hens in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, during its CBC, 21 Dec (Jack Rogers, et al.) were good finds for SC.

Red-breasted Merganser: Some of the higher counts made in the mountain region were 114 on Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 6 Dec (Kirk Gardner); 100+ on Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 6 Dec (Wayne Forsythe); and 75 at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, 6 Dec (Forsythe).

Wild Turkey: 97 in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Fussell) was a record total for that count, indicative of the species' increasing numbers.

Red-necked Grebe: Sightings were down again this winter, with only individuals seen off Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, 28 Jan (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) and at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 19 Feb (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland).

Eared Grebe: Individuals were seen on the Salt Pond at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 14 Dec (Marcia Lyons) through 6 Jan (Steve Howell); at the WTP in Jacksonville, Onslow Co, NC, 27 Dec (Andy Webb); at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan (Steve Calver, et al.); and off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Feb (Greg Massey, Harry Sell) through 4 Feb (Sherry Lane).

Eurasian Collared-Dove: 233 in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Fussell) was a noteworthy count.

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen in Litchfield Beach, Georgetown Co, SC, 20 Dec (Frank Lawkins) and visiting a feeder in Greenville, Pitt Co, NC, where photographed, 29 Dec through 10 Jan (Robert Driver).

Chuck-will's-widow: One seen near Billy Mitchell Airport in Frisco, Dare Co, NC, 7 Dec (Brian Patteson) was quite late while one heard in Mt Pleasant, Charleston Co, SC, 22 Feb (Craig Watson, et al.) was quite early.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: Winter sightings included one heard along Daws Creek Rd in Brunswick Co, NC, 31 Dec (Ricky Davis); one seen near the campus of UNC-Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 6 Jan (Sam Cooper); one seen and heard at Myrtle Beach SP, Horry Co, SC, 12 Jan (Scott Hartley); and one heard at the Francis Beidler Forest longleaf restoration site (restricted access), Dorchester Co, SC, 19 Feb (Matt Johnson).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: As many as 21 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds visited feeders in a yard in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, during the winter (Ann Maddock).

Anna's Hummingbird: An adult male visited a feeder in Buxton, Dare

Co, NC, 21 Dec through 15 Mar (Ann Maddock, m. obs.) where it was also banded 16 Jan (Susan Campbell), providing NC with its third record of this bird from the western United States.

Rufous Hummingbird: Visiting feeders was an immature male in Durham Co, NC, 8 Dec through 17 Mar (Scott Winton, m. obs.); a banded adult female in northern Wake Co, NC, throughout the winter for a seventh year in a row (James Harper, Pat O'Leary); a female in Garner, Wake Co, NC, banded 21 Dec (Susan Campbell); and an immature male in northern Guilford Co, NC, throughout the winter, banded 3 Feb (Campbell).

Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird: Individuals not identified to species visited feeders near Irmo, Lexington Co, SC, 26 Nov through 26 Mar (Jerry Griggs); in Brevard, Transylvania Co, NC, throughout the winter (Griggs, m. obs.); near Okatie, Beaufort Co, SC, throughout the winter (Cherry Underwood); in Mint Hill, Mecklenburg Co, NC, throughout the winter (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.); in Greenville Co, SC, 11-13 Jan (Doug Williams); and in Charleston Co, SC, 17-24 Feb (Lacy & Russell Johnson).

Yellow Rail: Two were flushed in the North River Marsh, Carteret Co, NC, 29 Dec (John Dole, et al.) and one was flushed at that same site 18 Feb (John Fussell, et al.)

Black Rail: One was flushed in the North River Marsh, Carteret Co, NC, 29 Dec (John Dole, et al.).

Clapper Rail: One photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 2 Dec (Greg Hudson) was quite unusual for a site so far from the coast.

Virginia Rail: One at Charles D. Owen Park, Buncombe Co, NC, 1 Jan (Chris Jaquette, Doug Johnston, Simon Thompson) into March (m. obs.) was unusual for the mountains.

Common Gallinule: One seen along the causeway at Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 9 Dec (Karen & Tom Beatty) and 1 Jan (Eric Alton, Tamara Conklin) was unusual for a site so far north during the winter season.

Sandhill Crane: Impressive counts were made in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, again this winter, with a high count of 71 made there 13 Jan (Dan Lovett, Steve Patterson). Other sightings made in SC included two to four at multiple sites southeast of Townville, Anderson Co, 19 Dec (Ann Bailes) through 12 Feb (Scott Davis); one photographed at a farm in Cherokee Co, 20 Dec (Marbry Hopkins); six over Wee Tee WMA, Williamsburg Co, 14 Jan (Jay Chandler, et al.); and 12 in a field off Two Churches Rd in Dorchester Co, 19 Jan (Matt Johnson). Sightings made in NC included two around Beaufort, Carteret Co, for a fifth winter in a row, 13 Dec (Martin Wall) through 26 Feb (fide John Fussell); one photographed just outside Snow Hill, Greene Co, 20 Dec (Neil Jernigan); three in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, border of Hyde Co and Washington Co, 27 Dec (Melissa Dowland, Sam Jolly) through 11 Feb (Phil Doerr, et al.); four near



American Avocet, 19 Feb 2017, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall.

Devotion, Surry Co, 4-6 Jan (Royce Hough); two in agricultural fields near Haw River SP, border of Guilford Co and Rockingham Co, 13-14 Feb (Tim Martin, m. obs.); and one heard calling in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, 14 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).

Black-necked Stilt: One photographed at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 28 Feb (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.) was early.

American Avocet: NC's and SC's respective high counts were 310 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, 2 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) and 500 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, 13 Jan (Mark Welford). One photographed on a dredge island in the Core Sound off Atlantic, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Martin Wall, et al.) was unusual for that area in winter.

American Oystercatcher: 978 in Charleston Co, SC, during the Charleston CBC, 2 Jan (Nora Schillerstrom, et al.) was the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Wilson's Plover: 18 on the beach at the east end of Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 6 Jan (Aaron Given, William Oakley) was an excellent count for the winter period. As usual, the area farthest north where the species was found during the winter was Carteret Co, NC, with one on the west end of Shackleford Banks, 18 Dec (Jamie Adams), two at Cape Lookout, 15 Jan (John Fussell, et al.), and one on the beach at Ft Macon SP, 25 Jan (Fussell).

Semipalmated Plover: 7916 in Charleston Co, SC, during the Sea Islands CBC, 4 Jan (fide Aaron Given) was, by far, the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Long-billed Curlew: Two were photographed at Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Dec (Pam Ford, et al.) and 18 Dec (Roger Smith) and one was seen at Fish Haul Creek Park, Beaufort Co, SC, 5 Feb (Bob White).

Ruff: One photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jan (Steve Calver, et al.) was a great find, especially for mid-winter.

Dunlin: One at Lake Wheeler, Wake Co, NC, 17 Dec (Harry LeGrand) through 8 Jan (W. S. Barbour) was unusual for a site so far from the coast in winter.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Individuals at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 25 Feb (Jeff Click) and along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, NC, where photographed, 27 Feb (Roberta Newton, Ann Van Sant) were early to arrive.

Spotted Sandpiper: Individuals at the McAlpine WTP, Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.) and on the Yadkin River at Pilot Mountain SP, Surry Co, NC, 12 Feb (Jesse Anderson, Nathan & Sarah Gatto) were unusual for sites so far from the coast during the winter. A total of five at different sites in Carteret Co, NC, in December (fide John Fussell) was a good number for the NC coast in winter. 16 in Beaufort Co, SC, during the Lowcountry CBC, 17 Dec (fide Buddy Campbell) was a record number for that count.

Pomarine Jaeger: Individuals off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 23 Dec (Sam Cooper) and off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, during the Southport CBC, 1 Jan (Greg Massey) were great from-shore sightings.

Parasitic Jaeger: A few of the higher counts were four off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 1 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock); three off Nags Head Fishing Pier, Dare Co, NC, 8 Dec (Sam Cooper); four off Kitty Hawk, Dare Co, NC, during its CBC, 17 Dec (Ricky Davis); two off Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 18 Dec (Keith McCullough); six in New Hanover Co, NC, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (fide Cooper); and three off Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, during the Southport CBC, 1 Jan (Davis).

Dovekie: Multiple sightings were made off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, starting 28 Jan, when up to 12 were seen (Jack Rogers, et al.), through 25 Feb, when two were seen (Ricky Davis).

Thick-billed Murre: One found amongst a raft of Razorbills off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 20 Feb (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand, Greg Massey) was a great find.

Razorbill: This species began irrupting down the outer banks in mid-January, with 200+ counted in a 30 minute span off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 18 Jan (Eric Dean). Later counts made at that site included 550 on 27 Jan (Ricky Davis, et al.), 1100 on 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Davis), 2000 on 20 Feb (Carter, Harry LeGrand), and a mind-boggling total of 7990 on 26 Feb (Carter, Davis). High counts at sites farther south included 38 off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Feb (Sam Cooper); 220 off Cape

Point, Dare Co, NC, 19 Feb (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland); and 26 at Ophelia Inlet, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Martin Wall, et al.). There were only a handful of reports made from the SC coast, the southernmost being a moribund individual photographed on the beach at Bloody Point, Beaufort Co, 25 Feb (Michael Loftus).

Black Guillemot: The individual found at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 27 Nov (Michael Robertson) was last seen 5 Jan (Mary Foster, Linda Nordell).

Black-legged Kittiwake: A first-winter bird was seen off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 20 Feb (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand).

Black-headed Gull: An adult at the east end of Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 15 Jan (Taylor Piephoff) was the only one reported this winter.

Little Gull: Amongst Bonaparte's Gulls off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, two, an adult and a first-winter bird, were seen 19 Feb (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand) and 26 Feb (Carter, Ricky Davis), and an adult individual was photographed 20 Feb (Greg Massey, Harry Sell).

Franklin's Gull: A first-winter gull photographed at Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Dec (Irvin Pitts, et al.) was the only one reported this winter.

Iceland Gull: Individuals were seen at Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 25 Nov (Henry Link, et al.) through 22 Dec (m. obs.); at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 10 Dec (Lucas Bobay, et al.) intermittently through 5 Feb (Kate Sutherland); in Frisco, Dare Co, NC, 8 Jan (Sutherland); at the Horry County Landfill, Horry Co, SC, 21 Jan (Pam Ford, et al.); at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 1 Feb (Josh Southern); and at the South Wake County Landfill, Wake Co, NC, 11 Feb (Bobay, et al.). Also, two distinct individuals were photographed at Cape Point, 21 Jan (Jamie Adams).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: As usual, the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC was made in Dare Co, NC, with 491 on the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (fide Pat Moore). 153 on the Kitty Hawk CBC, also in Dare Co, NC, 17 Dec (fide Jeff Lewis) was also a good count. A few of the better counts at sites away from the coast were ten in a field along US-64 just east of Jamesville, Martin Co, NC, 29 Dec (Edward Landi); 16 at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 17 Jan (Ricky Davis); and nine at the South Wake County Landfill, Wake Co, NC, 11 Feb (Lucas Bobay, et al.).

Glaucous Gull: One was seen at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 27 Dec (Edward Landi, Mike McCloy) intermittently through 25 Jan (Jeffery Sole).

Great Black-backed Gull: Inland sightings included one at Buckhorn Reservoir, Wilson Co, NC, 17 Jan (Ricky Davis) and 12 Feb (David Williams); six at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 1 Feb (Ed Corey); and one at the South Wake County Landfill, Wake Co, NC, 11 Feb (Lucas Bobay, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: One accidentally caught in a gill net set by Fisheries biologists at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 18 Jan (fide Brian O'Shea) was

almost certainly the same individual seen on the lake 13 Jan (Matt Spangler) and 14 Jan (Mark Kosiewski). 3,250 flying north off the end of Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, during a three-hour period 26 Feb (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis) was an impressive tally.

Pacific Loon: New Hanover County, NC, was again this winter the best area to find this species, with one off Figure Eight Island, 4 Dec (Derb Carter); one off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 29 Dec (Sam Cooper) through 21 Feb (m. obs.); one off the north end of Carolina Beach, 31 Dec (Brian, Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger); one off Oceanic Pier, 15 Jan (Carter); and two off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 1 Feb (Jamie Adams) and 18 Feb (Cooper). Interestingly, one seen in flight off Jennette's Pier, Dare Co, NC, 26 Feb (Ricky Davis) was the only sighting made in NC outside of New Hanover County. Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of one seen in Georgetown Co, SC, during the Litchfield-Pawleys Island CBC, 29 Dec (fide Chris Hill).

Common Loon: 3,443 in New Hanover Co, NC, most of which were seen from the north end of Carolina Beach, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger, et al.) was, by far, the highest total on any 2016 Audubon CBC.

Manx Shearwater: An unprecedented number of from-shore sightings were made along the Outer Banks this winter. Off Jennette's Pier in Dare Co, NC, after two were first seen 28 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Ed Corey), a handful of other sightings were made in early and mid-January, including three on 16 Jan (Michael Gosselin). In late January at that same site, after four were seen 27 Jan (Dwayne Martin, m. obs.) and eight were seen 28 Jan (Jack Rogers, m. obs.), a historic from-shore count of 217 was made during a three-hour span on the morning of 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Ricky Davis, et al.). Davis notes that most birds were flying south, with some as close as several hundred yards off the end of the pier, and some stopping to join the feeding groups of Razorbills. Sightings continued intermittently at that site through February until three were last seen 26 Feb (Carter, Davis). Though most sightings were made off Jennette's Pier, a few Manx Shearwaters were also seen from other sites in Dare County, including two off Cape Point, 19 Feb (Peter Flood, Kate Sutherland). Notably, one seen off of Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 7 Feb (Sam Cooper, Greg Massey) was the only sighting made outside of Dare County.

Wood Stork: An immature stork photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, border of Hyde Co and Washington Co, NC, 29 Jan (Ric Carter) was very unusual for that area of NC in mid-winter.

Brown Booby: Pending review by the NC BRC was the report of a sub-adult Brown Booby at Beaufort Inlet, seen from Ft Macon, Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (Ricky Davis). If accepted, this report would provide the Carolinas with its first winter record of this species.

Northern Gannet: Of interest, the four highest counts of Northern Gannets



Wood Stork, 29 Jan 2017, Washington Co, NC. Photo by Ric Carter.

made on all of this year's Audubon CBCs were made on CBCs in NC, the highest of which was 13,188 on the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 1 Jan (fide Ron Clark).

Double-crested Cormorant: Also the four highest counts of Double-crested Cormorants made on all of this year's Audubon CBCs were made on CBCs in NC, the highest of which was 35,000 on the Ocracoke Island CBC, 31 Dec (fide Peter Vankevich).

Great Cormorant: The highest counts at two traditional wintering sites were eight at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, 15 Jan (John Fussell, et al.) and seven at Masonboro Inlet, 21 Feb (Sam Cooper). Construction of a replacement bridge over Oregon Inlet may have hindered birders' access to that traditional wintering site this winter.

American White Pelican: High counts at traditional wintering sites along the coast included 490 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 1 Dec (Steve Calver); 100 at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 11 Dec (Susan Campbell, Jeff Pippen, et al.); and 100 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 10 Feb (David McLean, et al.). Sightings made outside of the coastal plain included four on Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 18-22 Jan (Gordon Brown, m. obs.); three on Lake Greenwood, Greenwood Co, SC, 17 Feb (Janet Ledebuhr); and up to 20 at the dam on High Rock Lake, Davidson Co, NC, 17-20 Feb (Wanda Fortner, m. obs.).

American Bittern: An individual wintered at the Prairie Ridge Ecostation in Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, for the fourth year in a row (Brian O'Shea, m. obs.).

Least Bittern: Unusual for winter were four heard calling at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 2 Jan (Lauren Morgens, Matthew



Green Heron, 1 Jan 2017, Richland Co, SC. Photo by Jerry Griggs.

Sarver) and one seen at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 18 Feb (Aija Konrad).

Reddish Egret: One at Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 3 Dec and 13 Jan (William Christenson, David McLean) was unusual for winter.

Green Heron: In NC where rare in winter, Green Herons were found on Radio Island, Carteret Co, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (Mike Tove, et al.); at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, 21 Dec (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock); and in Brunswick Co, during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC, 1 Jan (Ron Clark). One seen and photographed at Harbison Lake, Richland Co, SC, 1 Jan (Jerry Griggs) into February (m. obs.) was a good find for a site so far from the coast.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: An immature bird photographed at the north end of Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 3 Dec (Nathan & Sarah Gatto) and 7 Dec (Martin Wall) was unusual for a site so far north in winter.

Roseate Spoonbill: A few of the higher counts this winter were 15 at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center (restricted access), during the Winyah Bay CBC, 15 Dec (Pam Ford, et al.); 17 at Donnelley WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 12 Dec (Doris Ratchford); and 17 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 24 Feb (Steve Calver).

Osprey: Ten in Carteret Co, NC, during the Morehead City CBC, 18 Dec (fide John Fussell) was a record high for that count.

Swallow-tailed Kite: Two over Avon, Dare Co, NC, 26 Feb (Ann Maddock) were extremely early.

Golden Eagle: An adult bird was seen and photographed at Alligator River



Northern Saw-whet Owl, 9 Dec 2016, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Jeff Beane.

NWR, Dare Co, NC, 27 Jan (Matt Janson, Jack Rogers, m. obs.) and 29 Jan (Jeri Smart, et al.). In SC, one was seen at the Savannah River Site (restricted access), Aiken Co, during its CBC, 15 Dec (Carl Huffman) and a juvenile bird was photographed at Carolina Sandhills NWR, Chesterfield Co, 10 Jan (Don Crutchfield).

Short-eared Owl: The peak count at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, this winter was five on 27 Jan (Ricky Davis). Two along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 19 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra), and one there 25 Feb (Martin Wall), were locally unusual.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: One was seen and heard along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 9 Dec (Jeff Beane, Ed Corey, et al.) intermittently through 19 Feb (Greg Massey).

Peregrine Falcon: Up to two wintered in downtown Winston-Salem, Forsyth Co, NC, again this year (Ron Morris, m. obs.).

Nanday Parakeet: It is suspected that the escaped individual living in downtown Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, died, as it stopped being seen near the end of February (fide John Fussell). Of note, it wasn't particularly cold around the time it stopped being seen, and it had survived some very cold

winters since its first sighting in July 2009.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One seen and photographed at Greenfield Lake in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 21-22 Dec (Daniel Hueholt, m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.

Great Kiskadee: The most exciting find of the winter was that of a Great Kiskadee at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 9 Feb (Kelley Luikey). It was seen and photographed by many until it was last seen 26 Mar (Doug Gochfeld, et al.). Pending review by the SC BRC, this sighting will become the first record of this tropical flycatcher in the Carolinas if accepted.

Western Kingbird: Individuals were seen and photographed at two sites in Charleston Co, SC—on Sullivan's Island, 24 Dec (Doris Ratchford, Pam Ford) and at the Park West Recreation Complex, 18 Jan (Kathy Woolsey). One was seen on the fence at the Ft Fisher Ferry Terminal, New Hanover Co, NC, 28 Dec (Jurek Smykla), but not photographed.

White-eyed Vireo: Four along the Main Prong in the Croatan NF in Carteret Co, NC, 2 Dec (John Fussell) was a good count for that area in winter.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Individuals at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 27 Feb (Kevin Kubach) and at Rankin Lake, Gaston Co, NC, 28 Feb (Steve Tracy) were somewhat early to arrive.

Barn Swallow: Lingering into winter were individuals at the Salt Pond at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 10 Dec (Karen Lebing, m. obs.) and on the west end of Lake Phelps, Washington Co, NC, on the very late date of 30 Dec (Ed Corey).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: There was a minor irruption of this species into the Carolinas this winter. Some of the higher counts were 46 on Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 31 Dec (fide Peter Vankevich); 11 along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse, Dare Co, NC, 28 Dec (Jacob Socolar); eight at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center (restricted access), Georgetown Co, SC, during the Winyah Bay CBC, 15 Dec (Steve McInnis); four in Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell, Martha Mayo); four in Swannanoa, Buncombe Co, NC, 2 Jan (Simon Thompson); and three at Reedy Creek Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 16 Feb (Leigh Anne Carter).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One seen and photographed at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, 15 Dec (Kirk Gardner) and 5-11 Jan (Simon Thompson, Gardner, m. obs.) was a good find for the mountain region in winter.

Wood Thrush: One at Santee Coastal Reserve, Charleston Co, SC, 12 Feb (David Booth, Jeff Click, Linda Montgomery, Paul Serridge, et al.) was an amazing find for the winter season and the first ever to be photographed in the Carolinas during the winter.

Purple Finch: There was a minor irruption this winter, with sightings made across the Carolinas, though no new record high counts were made on any of our CBCs. 70 visiting feeders in a yard in Halifax Co, NC, 7 Jan (Frank



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, 5 Jan 2017, Haywood Co, NC.

Photo by Simon Thompson.

Enders) was the best count.

Red Crossbill: A few of the higher counts this winter, all from the NC mountains, were 13 at Leicester Patch, Buncombe Co, 29 Dec (Doug Johnston); eight at the Cataloochee Ski Area, Haywood Co, 4 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey); six in Buncombe Co, during its CBC, 2 Jan (Simon Thompson, Johnston); and 14 at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, 6 Feb (Clifton Avery).

Pine Siskin: There was only a minor influx of Pine Siskins into the Carolinas this winter. 70+ at the Cataloochee Ski Area, Haywood Co, NC, 4 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) was the highest count.

Lapland Longspur: Sightings included one photographed on the beach on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Dec (Aija & Ed Konrad); one seen in a harvested soybean field in central Horry Co, SC, 10 Dec (Stephen Thomas); and one heard along Inwood Rd in Wake Co, NC, during the Raleigh CBC, 17 Dec (Harry LeGrand).

Snow Bunting: Seven were seen on the beach on the south side of Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, 21 Dec (Marcia Lyons) through 24 Dec (Audrey Whitlock). Six on the beach on the north end of Oregon Inlet, during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC, 28 Dec (John Fussell) were probably part of that same flock. Also, one was seen at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan (Kate Sutherland) through 6 Feb (m. obs.).

Ovenbird: Winter sightings included three in the Frisco Woods, Dare Co,



Ovenbird, 8 Jan 2017, Dare Co, NC.

Photo by Jeff Lewis.

NC, during the Cape Hatteras CBC, 27 Dec (John Fussell); one at a feeder in Manteo, Dare Co, NC, 7 Jan through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis); two at that same feeder in Manteo, 8 Jan (Lewis); one at a feeder in Pittsboro, Chatham Co, NC, 8 Jan (Rouse Wilson); one near Rougemont, Durham Co, NC, 11 Jan (Helen Kalevas); and one in a yard in Buxton, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jan (Ann Maddock).

Louisiana Waterthrush: One photographed at McDowell Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 24 Feb (Kevin Metcalf) was very early.

Northern Waterthrush: One lingered at Beaver Lake, Buncombe Co, NC, until 12 Dec (Tom Bush), quite a late date for a site away from the coast. Five at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, during the Savannah GA-SC CBC, 2 Jan (Lewis Burke, et al.) was an excellent count of over-wintering birds.

Black-and-white Warbler: NC's and SC's respective winter high counts were ten in New Hanover Co, during the Wilmington CBC, 31 Dec (fide Sam Cooper) and 28 in Beaufort Co, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Susan Murphy). Five responding to playback near the golf course in Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 10 Dec (John Fussell, Martha Mayo) was a notable count for that area in winter.

Nashville Warbler: Individuals seen near the Glenburnie Quarry, Craven Co, NC, during the New Bern CBC, 19 Dec (Al Gamache, Steve Shaffer) and at a birdbath in Cabarrus Co, NC, where photographed, 23 Feb (Ginger

Walter) were great finds for winter.

Common Yellowthroat: One seen and photographed at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, NC, 26 Dec through 5 Mar (Wilcox, m. obs.) was very unusual for the mountain region in winter. 51 in Hyde Co, NC, during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (fide Susan Campbell) was our region's winter high count.

American Redstart: One at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Dec (Susan Campbell) was a good find for winter.

Cape May Warbler: Amazingly, not one, but two Cape May Warblers wintered at Coker Arboretum on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC. After a female/immature-plumaged individual was first seen 12 Feb (Lucretia Kinney), a male-plumaged bird was seen there the next day, 13 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra), and both birds were seen together 21 Feb (Mary Sonis) and 23 Feb (Kinney, et al.). Both remained at the site through 29 Mar (Kinney).

Northern Parula: Individuals were found at Washington Park, Forsyth Co, NC, during the Winston-Salem CBC, 17 Dec (Kim Brand, Doug Demarest) and at Coker Arboretum on the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill, Orange Co, NC, during the Chapel Hill CBC, 26 Dec (David & Judy Smith) and again 10-25 Feb (Lucretia Kinney, m. obs.) One heard on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 27 Feb (Jake Zadik) was likely an early spring arrival.

Yellow Warbler: Individuals were photographed at a WTP in Conway, Horry Co, SC, 21 Dec (John Hutchens) and 6 Jan (Chris Hill), and in Pineville, Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.). The sighting made in Pineville was most remarkable because almost all previous winter records are from the coastal plain.

Blackpoll Warbler: Two found amongst a flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers in the Roanoke Island Marshes, Dare Co, NC, 10 Dec (Susan Campbell, Jeff Phippen) were very late to depart.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: An adult male seen at a birdbath in Charleston, Charleston Co, SC, 29 Jan (Kristina Wheeler) was very unusual for mid-winter.

Yellow-throated Warbler: The high count along the SC coast was 23 in Beaufort Co, during the Hilton Head Island CBC, 15 Dec (fide Susan Murphy). One photographed at a suet feeder in Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC, 19 Jan (Bobby Koch) was the farthest north where one was seen this winter.

Prairie Warbler: Winter sightings included one photographed in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR in Hyde Co, NC, 2 Dec (Greg Hudson); one on Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, 28 Dec (Mike McCloy) and again during its CBC, 31 Dec (Jeff Beane, et al.); one photographed on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 2 Jan (Aija Konrad, et al.); and one on Kiawah Island, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Jan (Aaron Given, et al.).

Wilson's Warbler: An adult male photographed at Santee Delta WMA, Charleston Co, SC, during the McClellanville CBC, 18 Dec (Pam Ford, et al.) was a fantastic find.

Yellow-breasted Chat: At least a dozen were seen in the Carolinas this winter. Three at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, during its CBC, 29 Jan (Jacob Socolar, Susan Campbell) was a great count for winter. Chats were found at four different sites in New Hanover Co, NC, including the NC Aquarium at Ft Fisher, where one lingered 28 Jan (Virginia Holman) through 19 Feb (Ricky Davis). One visited a yard in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, where it fed on mealworms, 2 Jan through the end of the period (Martha Mayo, m. obs.). In SC, individuals were photographed at Oak Point Golf Course, Charleston Co, 21 Dec (Jake Zadik); at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, 28 Jan (George Stubbs); at Santee Delta WMA, Charleston Co, 11 Feb (Pam Ford, Craig Watson); and on James Island, Charleston Co, 20 Feb (Kelly Draganov).

Eastern Towhee: White-eyed Eastern Towhees photographed in a yard in Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, 11 Dec and 7 Jan (Sharon Kennedy) and in Croatan NF in Craven Co, NC, 8 Jan (Martin Wall) were unusual for sites so far north.

Bachman's Sparrow: This species was found at multiple sites in the Sandhills and coastal plain with appropriate longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat. Most notable, though, were the high counts made at Webb Wildlife Center in Hampton Co, SC, in late February—16 on 26 Feb (Kevin Kubach) and 23 on 27 Feb (Kubach), both excellent counts for winter.

Clay-colored Sparrow: One hung around for a while at a brush pile along Newland Rd in Washington Co, NC, where it was seen by many, 27 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Ed Corey) through 5 Feb (Jan Hansen, Jelmer Poelstra).

Vesper Sparrow: One seen at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 16 Feb through 22 Mar (Martin Wall, m. obs.) was unusual for that area in late winter.

Lark Sparrow: One spent the entire winter at the UNC Coastal Studies Institute on Roanoke Island, Dare Co, NC, where it was seen and photographed by many, 30 Nov through 13 Apr (Jeff Lewis, m. obs.). Another individual was seen along Stanford Rd near Cane Creek Reservoir in Orange Co, NC, 18 Jan (Loren Hintz) and 18 Feb (Keith Jensen, Eddie Owens) through 17 Mar (Maria de Bruyn).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Winter sightings included two photographed at the Francis Beidler Forest longleaf restoration site (restricted access), Dorchester Co, SC, 8 Feb (Matt Johnson) and two photographed at Holston Creek Park, Spartanburg Co, SC, 8 Feb (Michael Robertson).

Henslow's Sparrow: Winter sightings included four at the Savannah River Site (restricted access), Barnwell Co, SC, during its CBC, 15 Dec (Sam Murray, et al.); one in the Sandhills Game Land in Scotland Co, SC, 15 Jan (Kevin Metcalf, Rob Van Epps); and two at Webb Wildlife Center, Hampton Co, SC, 16 Feb (Steve Calver).

Le Conte's Sparrow: One seen and heard along Newland Rd near its intersection with Weston Rd in Washington Co, NC, 28 Jan (Jack Rogers, et al.) was the only one reported this winter.

Seaside Sparrow: Four heard singing at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co,



Lark Sparrow, 12 Jan 2017, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

NC, 26 Feb (Martin Wall) were unusual for that brackish, largely non-tidal marsh in winter.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Notable counts included seven along a half mile stretch of road bordering a young clear-cut east of Newport, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Dec (John Fussell, et al.) and three in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR in Washington Co, NC, 23 Dec (Ricky Davis). Individuals photographed at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 4 Dec (Audrey Whitlock) and at Myrtle Beach SP, Horry Co, SC, 23 Feb (John Hutchens) were unusual for those areas.

White-crowned Sparrow: 47 around Stone Mountain SP, Wilkes Co, NC, during its CBC, 1 Jan (fide Guy McGrane) was a remarkable total. 18 at Prater Farm in Anderson Co, SC, 9 Jan (Steve Compton, et al.) was also a good count.

Summer Tanager: One photographed at a feeder during the Charlotte CBC, 26 Dec (fide Ken Kneidel) was a first for that count and very unusual for a site so far from the coast. A female visited a feeder in Jackeys Creek Estates, Brunswick Co, NC, for a third winter in a row (Greg Massey). In SC, individual males were photographed at feeders in Charleston, Charleston Co, 22 Nov through 6 Mar (Lacy & Russell Johnson) and in Columbia, Richland Co, 7 Jan (Leslie Dillon).

Western Tanager: An adult male was photographed at a feeder in Greenwood, Greenwood Co, SC, 19 Dec (Denny Walker).

Blue Grosbeak: A first-year male photographed at a feeder in Lincolnton, Lincoln Co, NC, 5 Jan (Cathy Loughlin) was very unusual for the winter

season.

Painted Bunting: A few of the higher counts this winter were two at a feeder in Manteo, Dare Co, NC, 19 Dec (Karen Lebing); three at Cypress Wetlands, Beaufort Co, SC, 23 Dec (Jennifer Hunter); two at a feeder in Southern Shores, Dare Co, NC, 29 Dec through 12 Mar (Jim Gould); three at a feeder in Charleston, Charleston Co, SC, 7 Jan (Lacy & Russell Johnson); and two at a feeder at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 2-21 Feb (Martin Wall, m. obs.).

Dickcissel: A first-winter female was photographed underneath a feeder in Forestbrook, Horry Co, SC, 18 Feb (John Hutchens, et al.).

Red-winged Blackbird: A massive flock of 500,000 in an agricultural field northeast of Engelhard, Hyde Co, NC, 29 Jan (Jack Rogers, et al.) was an amazing total.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: One was seen amongst the massive Red-winged Blackbird flock in the agricultural fields near Engelhard, Hyde Co, NC, 17 Jan (Eric Dean), 29 Jan (Jack Rogers, et al.), and 5 Feb (Ricky Davis).

Brewer's Blackbird: For a second winter in a row, a small flock of Brewer's Blackbirds was seen in a horse pen along Gum Swamp Rd in Hyde Co, NC, with four seen during the Mattamuskeet NWR CBC, 29 Dec (John Fussell) and a high count of eight made 5 Feb (Ricky Davis). Also in eastern NC, six were seen along Canal B Rd in Washington Co, 22 Jan (Ricky Davis). High counts made in SC included 38 at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, 24 Dec (Scott Davis) and 80 in an agricultural area of Orangeburg Co, 29 Jan (Dennis Forsythe).

Bullock's Oriole: An adult male sporadically visited a feeder in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC, 27 Dec through 29 Jan (Bill & Loretta Hettler).

Baltimore Oriole: One photographed at a feeder in Woodfin, Buncombe Co, NC, 21 Dec (Alice Semanchuk) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

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The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
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- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
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The Chat

Quarterly Bulletin of Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
1809 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612



Carolina Bird Club
www.carolinabirdclub.org

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pinehurst, NC 28374 and
additional mailing offices

The Chat

Vol. 81

Summer 2017

No. 3



The Quarterly Bulletin of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
The Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

THE CHAT

ISSN No. 0009-1987

Vol. 81

Summer 2017

No. 3

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THE CHAT is published quarterly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374. Subscription price \$30 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Pinehurst, NC and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE CHAT, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374.

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A Camera-trap Survey Documents Widespread Distribution of Over-wintering Golden Eagles in Western North Carolina

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Abstract

We studied the incidence of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) in western North Carolina over the course of three winters. We established camera trap stations consisting of deer carcasses staked in front of trail cameras in forest openings. We documented Golden Eagles visiting bait at 17 of 26 (65%) camera trap stations in 16 of the 20 (80%) counties surveyed. With respect to the winter season, these represent eight new county records. We then examined one camera station's (Unaka Mountain) data at a finer scale. Here, we noted eagles on 14, 54, and 15 calendar days in 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively. Using plumage characteristics, we identified 5 individuals at Unaka in 2013, 14 in 2014, and 7 in 2015. Over the course of the study, half of the eagles at Unaka Mountain were adults, 42% were sub-adults, and 8% were juveniles. Finally, to assess the prevalence of incidental winter sightings, we examined peer-reviewed records of Golden Eagles spotted in western North Carolina during the winter months ($n = 29$). Over half of these incidental sightings hailed from the northern mountains. Our camera trap study demonstrates that wintering Golden Eagles are more widespread in the mountains than previously thought, but remain difficult to detect. Western North Carolina may be an important over-wintering area for Golden Eagles. **Keywords:** *Aquila chrysaetos*, camera trapping, Golden Eagle, Southern Appalachians, winter

Introduction

Eight decades after biologists noted an apparent migratory eastern population of Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) passing a hawk watch station in Pennsylvania, this population's winter ecology, distribution, and numbers in eastern North America are still poorly known. Recent research by the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group is improving our understanding of this population in the East. Compared to its western counterpart, the eastern Golden Eagle population is smaller with an estimated size of $5,000 \pm 2,000$ individuals (Dennhardt et al. 2015, EGEWG 2015, Morneau et al. 2015). Between 1970 and 2004, Golden Eagle numbers at hawk watch stations increased, but this trend has ceased in recent years (Dennhardt et al. 2015). The primary threats to Golden Eagles are lead poisoning, accidental capture in foothold traps, electrocution, and collisions with structures such as wind turbines (Fitzgerald et al. 2015, Katzner et al. 2012).

Eastern Golden Eagles nest in Labrador, Quebec, and Ontario (Katzner et al. 2012, Morneau et al. 2015) and migrate through the Great Lakes and Appalachians to over-winter in the Appalachians (Katzner et al. 2012) and other regions of the eastern USA. The highest density of wintering Golden Eagles in the East occurs in the north-central Appalachians, particularly in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia (Katzner et al. 2012). Southeastern states have only recently been systematically surveyed to assess the prevalence of overwintering Golden Eagles in the region (Katzner, Pers. Comm., Vukovich et al. 2015).

The status of the Golden Eagle in western North Carolina has been the topic of previous debate. Claims that the species historically nested in the North Carolina mountains were challenged by Lee and Spofford (1990) on the grounds that the evidence was anecdotal and inconclusive. Ganier (1933) described it as a "very rare resident in the mountains" and "very rare transient" in east Tennessee. It is considered a rare fall migrant and winter visitor to western North Carolina (LeGrand

et al. 2016) with a few sightings each winter and occasional records across the state, throughout the year.

Use of bait and trail cameras to document Golden Eagles greatly improved the understanding of the species' winter distribution in the central Appalachians (Jachowski et al. 2015). This technique exploits the species' readiness to scavenge. The success of the project prompted the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group to extend the study southward. With 74% of tracking data points in the West Virginia mountains occurring in large blocks of forest (Katzner et al. 2012), the heavily forested mountains of western North Carolina were deemed a priority for investigation. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (the Commission) participated in a winter camera trapping study in 2013, 2014, and 2015 to assess and update the incidence of wintering Golden Eagles in the North Carolina mountains. Our objective was to determine the distribution of wintering Golden Eagles and assess the importance of western North Carolina to these birds by using a standardized camera trap protocol. Here we report updated distribution information obtained from camera trap stations in 20 counties. In addition, we report demographic information and behavioral observations from a station with high eagle visitation.

Methods

Field Site Description. Western North Carolina falls within Bird Conservation Region 28-Appalachian Mountains (U.S. NABCI Committee 2000). The heavily forested Appalachian Mountains are dominated by oak-hickory and other hardwood and mixed forests with spruce-fir at the highest elevations. Approximately 30% of BCR 28 in North Carolina consists of public lands (e.g., national and state forests and parks, and state game lands), land trust holdings, and conservation easements. We assigned camera trap locations to five geographic sub-region categories: southwestern mountains ($n = 6$), central mountains ($n = 8$), northern mountains ($n = 8$), foothills ($n = 3$), or piedmont ($n = 1$).

For survey sites, we selected fields, wildlife openings, or edges of balds in a forested landscape at elevations ranging from ~579 to 1,676 m and where human disturbance was minimal. These openings ranged from less than 0.4 Ha to 4.8 Ha in size and the majority (75%) were less than 2.0 Ha. Annual survey effort varied with respect to availability of staff and volunteers. We conducted surveys November 2012 to March 2013 and January to March in 2014 and 2015. Initially we operated camera trap stations where staff was available in 2013 ($n = 9$ stations). We subsequently expanded the effort more broadly across western North Carolina in 2014 ($n = 13$ stations) and 2015 ($n = 15$ stations). Three of the survey stations straddled county lines; thus, a detection at these stations was noted as a record for both counties. We surveyed five stations all three years, allowing us to examine annual observed occupancy.

Camera Traps. We baited camera trap stations with road kill White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) staked to the ground near the edge of an opening and within 2 m of the camera. To reduce risk of exposure to lead shot, we collected deer after the close of gun season. In a few instances, a road kill Elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and beavers (*Castor canadensis*) served as bait. Great Smoky Mountains National Park staff baited their station with feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) taken with non-lead shot. We used Bushnell Trophy, Bushnell Trophy HD, and Reconyx PC900 Hyperfire Pro IR cameras. All cameras ran 24 hours per day and took a picture when motion triggered, and then paused for 60 seconds before the motion sensor could be triggered again. To minimize disturbance to eagles, we refreshed bait, memory cards, and batteries only as often as needed, usually every ~5 to 10 days. We reviewed images and noted the presence of Golden Eagles at each station and the time lag from initial deployment of bait to first detection.

We then examined one camera station's (Unaka Mountain, Mitchell County) data in finer detail. Here we noted time of day when an eagle visited the station based on each image's time stamp, age class based on plumage (Bloom and Clark 2001,

Ellis 2004, Liguori 2004), and identity of individuals based on distinguishing plumage characteristics. Age class nomenclature followed Liguori (2004) with juveniles having all juvenal flight feathers, sub-adults having a mix of juvenal and adult flight feathers, and adults (>4 years old) having replaced all juvenal flight feathers. We calculated average length of stay (\pm standard deviation). Three independent reviewers scrutinized images to identify individual eagles.

Finally, to assess the prevalence of incidental winter sightings by birders, we examined records of Golden Eagles spotted in western North Carolina during the winter months. We compiled peer-reviewed records published in *The Chat*, *Briefs for the Files* between 1974 and 2015. Records from the Great Balsams in the 1980s were considered but with the caveat of the potential confounding effect of an effort at that time to establish a breeding Golden Eagle population from eagles released in the North Carolina mountains. Due to the potential to confuse juvenile bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and adult Golden Eagles, we elected not to compile sightings that had not undergone peer-review, such as those reported on birding listservs. With few exceptions, records in eBird.org also appear in *Briefs for the Files*.

Results

All Camera Stations. One purpose of our study was to better understand the winter distribution of eagles. We documented Golden Eagles at 17 of 26 (65%) stations in 16 of 20 (80%) counties surveyed (Figure 1, Table 1). With respect to the winter season, eight of these represented new county records (Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Surry, Swain, and Yancey). We documented eagles at camera stations in all sub-regions: southwestern mountains, central mountains, northern mountains, foothills, and piedmont. The highest elevation camera trap station with Golden Eagles was at 1,660 m; the lowest was at 603 m. In winter 2013, we detected eagles at five of nine (56%) camera trap stations. In 2014, we detected

eagles at eight of 13 (62%) camera trap stations. In 2015, we detected eagles at nine of 15 (60%) camera trap stations.

We determined how quickly eagles located deer carcasses by examining date stamps on each image. Average time elapsed from deployment of cameras and deer carcasses to first detection of a Golden Eagle was 13 days in 2013, 19.7 days in 2014, and 10.6 days in 2015. However, eagles were documented within two hours of initial baiting at Mitchell River Game Land and Nolton Ridge (Graham County) and within two days at Catpen (Madison County).

Of the five sites surveyed for >1 year, we detected eagles all three years at Unaka Mountain and Thurmond Chatham Game Land (Wilkes County). We detected eagles at Mitchell River Game Land (Surry County) in 2014 and 2015 but only in 2014 at Buffalo Cove Game Land (Caldwell County). We never detected eagles on Joanna Road (Transylvania County).

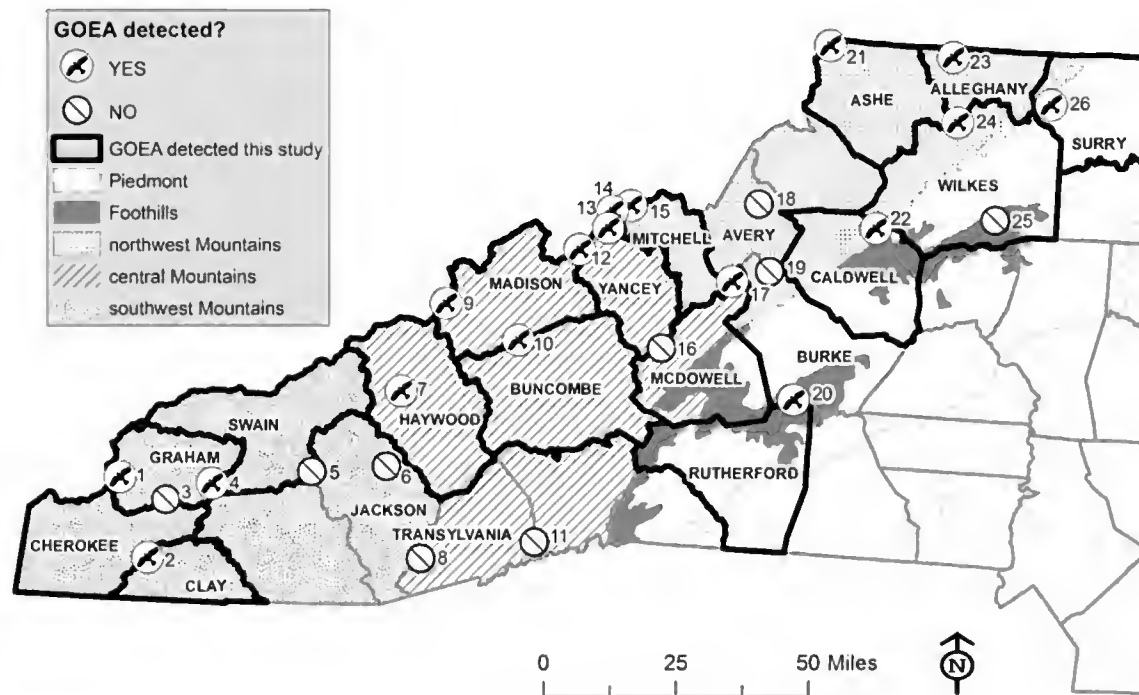


Figure 1. Locations of 26 camera trap stations surveyed for at least one winter season (2013, 2014, and/or 2015) and summary of Golden Eagle detections in western North Carolina.

Unaka Mountain Camera Trap Station. Another purpose of our study was to estimate numbers, summarize age classes, and determine length of stay of eagles visiting Unaka Mountain. The first winter we detected eagles on 14 of 48 (29%) calendar days surveyed between December 28, 2012 and February 13, 2013. We identified five individuals consisting of three adults and two sub-adults and we noted unknown individuals on two days. Two adult eagles pictured at Unaka Mountain also visited the Flat Top camera trap station located 9.7 km away. The second winter we detected eagles on 54 of 80 (68%) calendar days surveyed between December 23, 2013 and March 23, 2014. We identified 14 individuals consisting of five adults, seven sub-adults, and two juveniles (Figure 2) and we noted unknown individuals on seven days. The two juveniles arrived on February 21 and 23, 2014. The third winter we detected eagles on 15 of 29 (52%) calendar days surveyed between

January 8 and February 13, 2015. We identified seven individuals consisting of five adults and two sub-adults. We also trapped eagles at this camera station for a related GPS telemetry study. Thus, we knew that at least two individuals were returning birds: An adult male captured in 2013 again visited Unaka Mountain in 2015. In one image, he fed simultaneously with an adult female that was captured on February 11, 2015 and previously observed with this male in 2013. Disturbance associated with trapping may have affected visitation in the days following trapping. Despite this, eagle visitation remained high overall at Unaka Mountain.



Figure 2. Adult Golden Eagle pictured at Unaka Mountain on February 22, 2014.



Figure 3. Juvenile Golden Eagle pictured at Unaka Mountain on February 22, 2014.



Figure 4. Sub-adult Golden Eagle pictured at Unaka Mountain on February 22, 2014.

Over the course of the three winters at Unaka Mountain we captured 1,157 images of Golden Eagles and documented them on a total of 83 calendar days. We noted a single eagle on 46 calendar days and >1 individual on 37 calendar days (Figure 3).

The highest number of individual eagles visiting the site in a single day was five on February 23, 2014. Despite the presence of multiple individuals per day, Golden Eagles fed together on just three occasions: two adults on February 7, 2013, an adult and sub-adult on January 31, 2014, and two adults on February 6, 2015. In all other visits an individual fed alone. However, additional video footage and observations from a blind documented more instances of two eagles feeding together than the still cameras documented. Length of stay of adult eagles ($n = 13$) averaged 4.7 days (± 4.4 days). The longest lengths of stay for three adults were 12, 11, and 10 days. Length of stay of sub-adult eagles ($n = 11$) averaged 3.5 days (± 1.9 days) and the longest length of stay was six days for two individuals. One juvenile was documented on 20 days and a second juvenile on nine days. Eagles visited bait throughout the day, but never between sunset and sunrise.

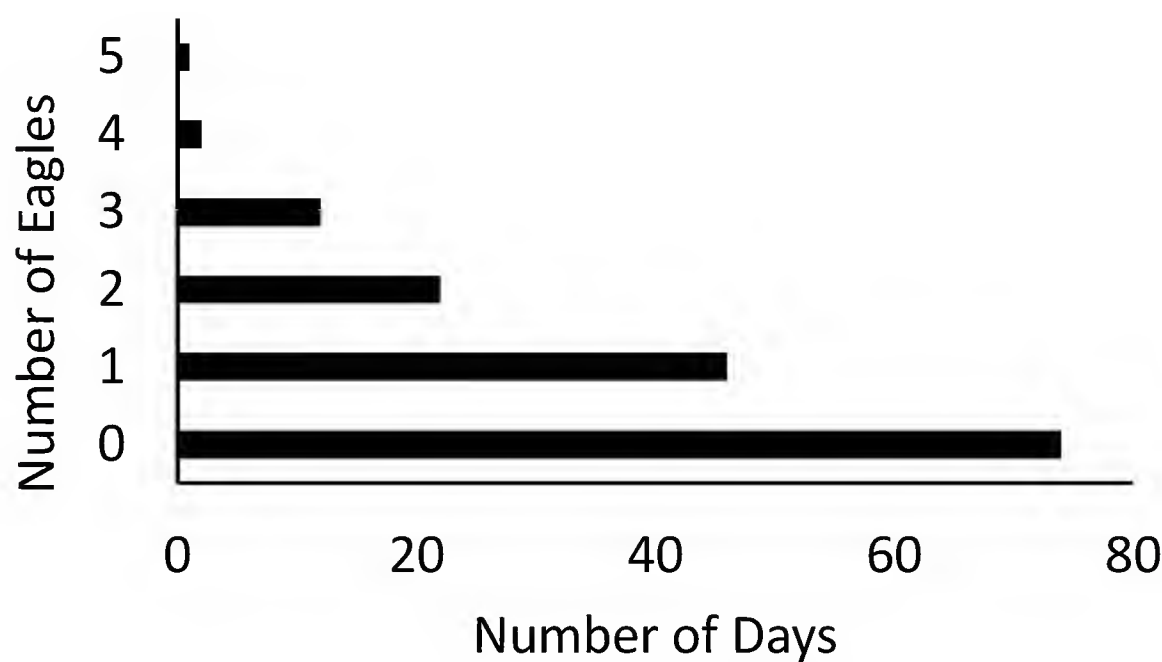


Figure 5. Number of Golden Eagles detected per day over the course of three winters (2013, 2014, and 2015) at Unaka Mountain camera station.

Records from *The Chat*. We found 114 reports of Golden Eagles in western North Carolina published in *The Chat Briefs for the Files* between 1974 and 2015 with records spanning

every month of the year. Of these we examined 29 reports falling between early January and late March to coincide with the timeframe of the bulk of our camera trapping effort. Seventeen records (58%) originated from the northern mountains. The remaining twelve records originated from the piedmont (1), foothills (2), central mountains (8), and southwestern mountains (1) and in total represent 13 counties. Ninety percent of winter records reported a single bird and only three reported multiple individuals. Adult eagles represented 48% of these sightings, immatures 32%, and 19% were of undetermined age. For most records of immatures, it was unclear if the bird was a juvenile or sub-adult. Published winter records outside of the January to March timeframe of our study included 15 for the month of December. For the southwestern mountains, we found published accounts of Golden Eagles limited to two summer records (Graham County), one autumn record (Swain County), and no winter or spring records. We found two other sources of winter Golden Eagle records. a U.S. Forest Service file noted 12 observations of Golden Eagles in the Shining Rock area (Haywood County) of the Pisgah Ranger District during surveys conducted by staff in winter 1974 and 1975 (Sanders 1976). The Commission’s peregrine falcon monitoring data noted Golden Eagles invading falcon territories in Macon (February 2014) and Madison Counties (March 2004).

Table 1. Annual survey effort and detections of Golden Eagles at camera trap stations (*n* = 26) in western North Carolina in winters 2013, 2014, and 2015.

Site #				Golden Eagle detected?		
	Site	County	Region ¹	2013	2014	2015
1	Oak Knob	Graham	SW	-	-	Yes
2	Leatherwood	Clay/Cherokee	SW	-	Yes	-
3	Walker Fields	Graham	SW	-	No	-

4	Nolton Ridge	Swain/Graham	SW	-	-	Yes
5	Pigpen Flats	Swain	SW	-	No	-
6	Balsam Mountain Preserve	Jackson	SW	No	-	-
7	Purchase Knob	Haywood	C	-	-	Yes
8	Toxaway Mountain	Transylvania	C	-	No	-
9	Catpen	Madison	C	-	-	Yes
10	Sandy Mush Game Land	Madison/Buncombe	C	-	Yes	-
11	Joanna Road	Transylvania	C	No	No	No
12	Big Bald	Yancey	C	Yes	-	-
13	Flat Top	Yancey	C	Yes	-	-
14	Shinbone	Mitchell	N	-	-	Yes
15	Unaka Mountain	Mitchell	N	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Curtis Creek	McDowell	C	-	-	No
17	Humpback Mountain	McDowell	N	-	Yes	-
18	Sugar/Bald Mountain	Avery	N	-	No	-
19	Ripshin	Burke	N	-	-	No
20	South Mountains Game Land	Rutherford	F	-	Yes	No
21	Pond Mountain Game Land	Ashe	N	-	-	Yes
22	Buffalo Cove Game Land	Caldwell	F	No	Yes	No
23	Turkey Knob	Alleghany	N	Yes	-	-
24	Thurmond-Chatham Game Land	Wilkes	N	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	Brushy Mountains	Wilkes	F	-	-	No
26	Mitchell River Game Land	Surry	P	No	Yes	Yes

¹ C = central mountains. F = foothills. N = northern mountains. P = piedmont. SW = southwestern mountains. A dash (-) indicates no survey conducted.

Discussion

Our camera trapping survey resulted in new county records for the winter season, thus increasing distribution knowledge of

Golden Eagles. Our data are especially important in light of a recent change in trends of Golden Eagles at hawk watch stations that indicates the increasing population trend stabilized in 2004 (Dennhardt et al. 2015). Concurrently, eagle biologists are concerned about rapid wind energy development in the Central Appalachians and unresolved threats posed by lead poisoning and accidental capture in foothold traps.

Perhaps the most significant new records were those that filled in distribution gaps in the southwestern mountains. We have first county records for the Cheoah, Unicoi, and Valley River Mountains in that corner of the state. Prior to our study, sightings from the southwestern mountains were scant and most sightings were from the High Country of northwestern North Carolina. Furthermore, we documented wintering Golden Eagles broadly across the region- in North Carolina's southwestern, central, and northern mountains and in the foothills and western piedmont.

The number of golden eagles visiting the Unaka Mountain camera trap station was remarkably high, with as many as 14 individuals in the 2014 season. In comparison, the highest number reported on the coastal plain in the Carolinas was eight individuals identified from seven camera trap stations (Vukovich et al. 2015). The presence of more than one individual per day was not unusual at our Unaka Mountain camera trap, occurring on 37 days of surveys. Our data of eagles scavenging at a deer carcass diverge from most North Carolina winter records from birders, which typically note a single eagle in flight that is often not relocated. A notable exception in the published records were reports of three adults and one "immature" eagle at Bakers Mountain Park (Catawba County) in December 2003 (Davis 2004, D. Martin, Pers. Comm.). This observation bears greater similarity to our camera trap observations than other winter reports. Furthermore, these December sightings at Bakers Mountain followed three other sightings of adult and immature eagles at Bakers Mountain in May, June, and October, 2003.

In addition to being numerous, Golden Eagles visited Unaka Mountain fairly frequently, on 52% of total survey days. Not surprisingly given the presence of bait, sixty-two percent ($n = 26$) of identifiable individuals visited on multiple dates. The longest number of days we detected individuals at the Unaka Mountain station was lower than the 30 and 31 days reported for two adult Golden Eagles in South Carolina (Vukovich et al. 2015). However, the results of that study represent a compilation of data from seven camera trap stations spread across the Savannah River Site, whereas ours represented a single camera trap station. Movement of one of our transmittered birds between Unaka Mountain and Flat Top was similar to the short-distance movements documented in South Carolina. Thus, we suspect that the number of days individuals were detected would have been higher had we included data from our additional camera trap stations situated in the vicinity of Unaka Mountain at distances comparable to the spacing of stations across the South Carolina study area.

Golden Eagles in our study exhibited winter site-fidelity, much like Golden Eagles in the West (Kochert et al. 2002). At Unaka Mountain we observed apparent site-fidelity to the wintering grounds across years in at least five adult eagles (three females, two males) identified and tracked with cameras and/or telemetry, even when bait was not supplied in winter 2016 (C. Kelly, unpublished data). In other studies, eagles exhibited winter site fidelity in Alabama and South Carolina (Soehren, Pers. Comm., Vukovich et al. 2015). Quick return to mid-season replacement of bait, a phenomenon observed in our study and in South Carolina, suggests that eagles had remained in the area. Frequent and/or repeat visitation to baited camera traps may be higher where topography favors development of updrafts, which may in turn facilitate detection of carcasses (Jachowski et al. 2015). Or the site may be situated closer to roost sites or hunting/scavenging grounds or further from human disturbance. Further analysis of winter home range, habitats, and distribution of GPS-tracked Golden Eagles in

North Carolina is needed and currently in progress to better understand wintering behavior.

The Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group's approach of using baited camera traps allowed us to rapidly gather distribution information for Golden Eagles wintering in North Carolina. Golden Eagles arrived quickly at some camera trap sites at the start of the survey season, suggesting their presence in the area prior to baiting, a phenomenon observed in South Carolina as well (Vukovich et al. 2015). Using a baited camera station could potentially introduce bias to the distribution of Golden Eagles by luring them to a site (Jachowski et al. 2015). However, we contend that this bias is minimal, in light of the distances between camera stations, concurrent presence of eagles at these sites, and apparent site fidelity even in the absence of bait.

Wintering Golden Eagles are likely much more widespread than previously thought but remain generally undetected due to low birder visitation to remote, often inaccessible forest tracts in winter. In fact, the remoteness of the North Carolina mountains suits the Golden Eagle's apparent aversion to human disturbance. Researchers in South Carolina attribute high detections of Golden Eagles at their study site to the fact that visitor access to the Savannah River Site is tightly restricted (Vukovich et al. 2015).

Management Implications

Our findings should inform management of Golden Eagles, especially with respect to threats posed by foothold traps, lead ammunition used in feral hog eradication and game hunting, and wind energy development. To reduce accidental capture of eagles in foothold traps, biologists in Quebec recommend bait be buried in containers and positioned at least 30 m from a trap in case it becomes uncovered (Fitzgerald et al. 2015). In West Virginia, bait must be concealed if it is within 15 m of a trap (WVDNR 2016). Even with restrictions on bait placement, it is possible that Golden Eagles and other raptors may still be accidentally captured in foothold traps due to their ability to

walk long distances searching for the bait. Implementing and enforcing requirements on solidly anchoring traps and daily trap attendance, as well as trapper education on how they should respond if they capture a raptor, will decrease injuries and mortalities (Olfenbuttel, pers. comm.). Golden Eagles in our study scavenged deer and feral hog carcasses. Vukovich et al (2015) recommended that managers of feral hog control programs should incorporate measures to minimize exposure of Golden Eagles to lead ammunition. These recommendations are especially relevant for Mitchell County, an area with both abundant eagles and abundant feral hogs as well as an active hog eradication program (M. Crockett, Pers. Comm.). Although the North Carolina Administrative Code (15A NCAC 10B .0106) specifies that the non-edible portions of a deer carcass should be buried or disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner, the potential for eagles to ingest lead when scavenging carcasses of deer taken with lead shot remains a concern (NCWRC 2016). Lastly, distributional records for wintering Golden Eagles are increasingly needed due to interests in wind energy development in the mountains (Raichle and Carson 2009, Graeter et al. 2015).

Our results contribute to information needed by the Commission, by the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group, and by birders. Midway through our study, the Golden Eagle was listed as a species with a significant knowledge gap in the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan (NCWRC 2015). Likewise, as a result of this regional camera trapping effort, 12 eastern states now list the Golden Eagle in their State Wildlife Action Plans, up from just five states in 2012 (Katzner et al. 2012). Despite declines at fall migration hawk watch stations, winter sightings of Golden Eagles are on the rise. This is a direct consequence of this increased survey effort and awareness (EGEWG 2015). Birders wishing to check the Golden Eagle off their list should investigate small openings situated in large forest blocks at prominent topographic positions, especially places with expansive views of the valleys below, and search for soaring birds riding the thermals.

Acknowledgments

This study would not have been possible without volunteers, technicians, and individuals who helped collect deer, manage camera trap stations, and review pictures, including B. Allen, D. Allen, C. Avery, R. Ballentine, A. Cameron, J. Creegan, W. Duncan, M. Greene, C. Henline, K. Holdbrooks, K. Hollifield, M. Hopey, D. Jones, J. Keeper, T. Keller, E. Kimbrel, C. Kreh, J. Macemore, J. Mayfield, A. Paoletta, K. Parker, M. Parks, D. Ray, Z. Sharp, N. Shaver, M. Skinner, P. Super, G. Taylor, P. Thompson, M. Tipton, T. Wait, M. Williams, D. Woody, and J. Yale. In addition, we would like to thank the National Park Service's feral hog crew, the NC Department of Transportation, Southern Appalachian Raptor Research, and students from Haywood Community College for their help. We thank private land owners who granted us permission to conduct surveys on their land. Finally, we thank T. Miller, C. Olfenbuttel, and S. Somershoe for reviewing the manuscript. This study was initiated and coordinated by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and funding was provided by Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration and the North Carolina Non-Game and Endangered Species fund.

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Received 11 August 2017

Status of the Gray Kingbird in South Carolina and Neighboring Regions

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In South Carolina, the Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) was once a casual breeder in Charleston County. Apparently it no longer breeds and is now a rare, irregular transient on the immediate coast, and a casual visitor on the coastal plain outside the tidal zone. This kingbird breeds from northern Colombia and Venezuela, through the Caribbean Basin and the Bahamas, and in North America from Mississippi to southeastern North Carolina. North of Florida, it has been found nesting only near the coast (Post 2013).

Breeding

South Carolina has six confirmed nesting records, all made before 1894. In spring 1832, the son of Paul Lee showed Rev. John Bachman a pair of Gray Kingbirds that were nesting on the College of Charleston campus. The kingbirds' first nest was destroyed, but they nested again that year, and continued doing so at least three more years, rearing two broods each season (Audubon 1831). A. T. Wayne (1894) found the next nest on 27 March 1885, on Sullivan's Island. The nest, which contained one egg, was in a White Poplar (*Populus alba*) within a meter of a residence. Wayne collected the female and egg. On 30 May 1893, Wayne collected two adults and a clutch of two eggs, also on Sullivan's Island, in the vicinity of Ft. Moultrie. Upon dissection, he found the female was about to lay a third egg. The nest, also in a private yard, was 6 m above ground near the top of a Southern Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*). Based on Wayne's data, SC egg dates are 27-30 May.

In May 1927 Wayne and A. Sprunt, Jr. saw a Gray Kingbird in Mt. Pleasant and suspected it of breeding; Wayne searched "every suitable locality", but found no nest (Wayne 1927).

E.v.S. Dingle saw four Gray Kingbirds together on the western end of Sullivan's Island on 11 August 1942. Two to four Gray Kingbirds were seen together on Lighthouse (Cape) Island, Cape Romain, in three breeding seasons (1945 to 1947; J. Shuler, A. Sprunt, Jr.), and it is possible nesting occurred. T. Patterson saw a pair on 11-13 May 1984 in appropriate nesting habitat on Fripp Island. On 13 July 1993, at Debidue Beach (Georgetown Co.), Lex Glover saw a pair accompanied by a juvenile, but the nesting locality could not be determined.

Nonbreeding

Excluding possible breeding individuals, from 1909 to 1955, Gray Kingbirds were reported in SC in only six years. After the 1950s, the Kingbirds were noted more regularly: in 30 of the 55 years (from 1961 to 2015).

Coast Through 2016, at least 53 reports have been published. The extreme dates are 9 April (1964, Edisto Island) to 28 October (2000, James Island). The kingbirds have occurred in two peaks: mid-April to late May: (64% of reports), and late July to early September (31%). Gray Kingbirds found in spring north of their breeding range may represent cases of overshooting (Armistead and Illiff 2002). Veit and Petersen (1993) believe that overshooting may lead to northward range expansion, and extralimital birds should be classified as pioneers rather than vagrants.

Coastal Plain Through 2016, seven reports were made, all in the fall: (1) Savannah River Site, in Aiken Co. on 19 November 1956 (Odum and Norris 1957), (2) Lake Moultrie on 7 August 1976 (Crutchfields), (3) Santee NWR on 25 October 1980 (Beatty *et al.*), (4) Greeleyville, (Williamsburg Co.), 27-28 October 1989 (Lex Glover *et al.*, photo), (5) Columbia, 6-12 September 2004 (Mike Turner, photo in *North American Birds* 59:60; verified by SC Bird Records Committee, no. 2015-020), (6) Richland Co., 27-29 August 2006 (R. Carter *et al.*, photo; verified, SCBRC no. 2015-019), (7) Santee NWR, 29 October 2016 (C. Donnelly, N. Dias, photo).

Neighboring regions

North Carolina has at least 70 reports through 2015, spanning the period 12 March (1957) –2 November (2002). Unlike South Carolina, where all inland reports have been from the Coastal Plain, birds have been seen in the NC Piedmont on at least three occasions. At Raleigh, two were seen on 16 April 1959 and one appeared on 3 October 2015. At North Wilkesboro, one showed up on 5 August 1966. These sightings are unusual because of their distances from the ocean (Raleigh, 190 km; North Wilkesboro, 350 km).

Breeding may have occurred at Southport Village, NC, in 1957 (B.R Chamberlain 1975; Audubon Field Notes 11:398). For several weeks, starting 28 June, a “group” of the kingbirds was present (Waters Thompson) and on 21 August, Cecil Appleberry watched four, one of which he “suspected might be a bird of the year”. During 1-21 June 1996, two Gray Kingbirds were associating at Ft. Caswell, Brunswick County. Nesting was confirmed the next year at the same site, where, on 21 June, Wayne Irwin photographed a nest that contained two eggs (Chat 62:45, 1998). Ft. Caswell is the Gray Kingbird's northernmost nesting location in North America.

In Georgia, the first nest was found in July 1938 on Cockspur Island (Eyels 1938). Another nest was found on the same island on 24 June 1939 (Eyels 1941). The Gray Kingbird has nested at other Georgia localities: Sea Island (1983), Jekyll Island (1991), and Savannah (2005). On Jekyll Island on 9 October 1994, M.W. Oberle saw adult Gray Kingbirds feeding young cowbirds (species unknown: Brown-headed Cowbirds, *Molothrus ater*, as well as Shiny Cowbirds, *M. bonariensis*, were in the area). In Georgia, 30 of 48 occurrences were in April-May. Due to the presence of breeding birds, a relatively large proportion of Georgia reports (32%) have been in summer. In fall, a peak occurred in August (21% of sightings). Several winter reports have been made, but none verified. The range of Georgia dates is 16 April to 2 November.

Documentation

Specimen Study skins (male; Charleston Museum 30.147.514), collected by A.T. Wayne on Sullivan's Isl., 30 May 1893. A female (Am. Museum of Natural History 306308), collected 30 April 1840 by Audubon, was probably from the College of Charleston population.

Photograph Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, SC 10 October 2015 (Pam Ford; Carolina Bird Club Photo Gallery)
<https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/gallery/Ford/grak.html>

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Received 13 October 2017

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Spring 2017, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **Co** – County, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: One seen around ponds in the Mill Pointe subdivision in Elon, Alamance Co, NC 16-22 Apr (Steve Dingeldein, m. obs.) was unusual for the Piedmont region. 12 photographed in Oriental, Pamlico Co, NC, 8 May (Greg Perry) was an impressive count for NC. An individual was also photographed near Palmetto-Peartree Preserve, Tyrrell Co, NC, 30 May and 2 Jun (Ben Decker, Alicia Jackson).

Greater White-fronted Goose: One seen and photographed at Mulligan's Pond in Caldwell Co, NC, 15 Apr (Walt Kent) through 30 Apr (Ken Kneidel) was somewhat late.

"Eurasian (Common) Teal": A drake of the Eurasian race of Green-winged Teal was seen and photographed at the Ocean Isle Beach WTP, Brunswick Co, NC, 6-13 Mar (Taylor Piephoff, m. obs.).

Redhead: Two lingered at the WTP along NC-191 in Henderson Co, NC, until 14 May (Aaron Steed, et al.).

Ring-necked Duck: A drake lingered on a small pond along US-1 in southern Lee Co, NC, 21 May and 10 Jun (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton).

Common Eider: Late to depart was a drake photographed on the north side of Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 16 May (Robert Snowden) and three, one drake and two hens, at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, until 30 May (Ellen & Jerry Horak).

Harlequin Duck: Two, a drake and a hen, seen off the coquina rock outcrop at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Mar (Thomas Gray, m. obs.) were probably the same two ducks seen at that site in February. Also in New Hanover County were three hens off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, 27 Mar (Sam Cooper).

Surf Scoter: An adult male photographed at Archie Elledge WTP (limited access), Forsyth Co, NC, 30 Mar (David Disher, et al.) was noteworthy for an inland site.

Bufflehead: A hen photographed on Smyrna Creek, Carteret Co, NC, 19 May (Martin Wall) was late to depart.

Hooded Merganser: Breeding was confirmed at three sites—at the Little Creek Waterfowl Impoundment, Durham Co, NC, where a hen was seen with nine immature ducks, 8 May (Mark Kosiewski, Matt Spangler); at Kathwood Lakes, Silver Bluff Audubon Center, Aiken Co, SC, where a hen was seen with ten immature ducks, 12 May (Drew Grainger); and in the Beaverdam Creek arm of Lake Hartwell, Anderson Co, SC, where a hen was seen with seven immature ducks, 26 May (Scott Davis).

Common Merganser: Breeding in western NC was confirmed again this year when a total of 26, including one hen with ten juvenile ducks and a second hen with seven juvenile ducks, were seen and photographed

along the Dan River in Stokes Co, NC, 15 Apr (Jesse & Shannon Anderson, Nathan & Sarah Gatto). Suggestive of possible breeding were two, a drake and a hen, on the Ararat River near where it meets the Yadkin River in Surry Co, NC, 4 May (Anderson) and six, one drake and five hens, on the South Toe River near Celo, Yancey Co, NC, 13 May (Travis Knowles, et al.).

Horned Grebe: One lingered on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, until 30 May (David Williams).

White-winged Dove: One photographed on Oak Island, Brunswick Co, NC, 12 May (Cathy & Thomas McNeil) was the only one reported this spring.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: One recorded singing along Faulkner Rd in York Co, SC, 8 Mar (Steven Biggers) was quite early.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: An immature male was seen and photographed at a feeder in Beaufort, Carteret Co, NC, 31 Mar through 14 Apr (Martin Wall, m. obs.).

Black Rail: Black Rails were heard calling along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, on multiple dates this spring, 16 Apr (John Fussell, et al.) into summer, with a high count of seven heard there 9 May (Jelmer Poelstra).

Clapper Rail: One photographed at a farm in Harnett Co, NC, 23 Apr (Susan Campbell) must have been forced down by inclement weather while migrating.

Virginia Rail: Three at Walnut Cove WTP (limited access) in Stokes Co, NC, 21 Apr (Jesse Anderson) was a good count for a site in the Piedmont.

Sora: Five at Walnut Cove WTP (limited access) in Stokes Co, NC, 21 Apr (Jesse Anderson) and nine at Harris Lake, Wake Co, NC, 22 Apr (Lucas Bobay, et al.) were good counts for the Piedmont.

Purple Gallinule: One photographed at Horseshoe Lake in Bladen Co, NC, 7 May (Mark Shields) was NC's first sighting in three years. Individuals photographed at Brick Pond Park in Aiken Co, SC, 8 May (Lois Stacey) and at the "Old Gravel Quarry" (restricted access) in Marlboro Co, SC, 10 May (Irvin Pitts, Mac Williams) were unusual for those sites away from the coast.

Common Gallinule: Breeding was confirmed at the "Old Gravel Quarry" (restricted access) in Marlboro Co, SC, when four juveniles were seen amongst 20 adults, 10 May (Irvin Pitts, Mac Williams).

Limpkin: Individuals photographed at the north end of Lake Robinson, Greenville Co, SC, 2 May (Barb Hennessy) and along Poplar Creek at Santee SP, Orangeburg Co, SC, 12 May (Ann Wilson) were great finds for the Carolinas.

Sandhill Crane: Spring sightings included one in a corn field along Deerfield Rd in Watauga Co, NC, 18 Mar (Audrey Wilcox) and 19 Mar (Richard Gray); one over Max Patch Bald, 10 Apr (Jamie Adams); two at Murray's Mill in Catawba Co, NC, 26 Apr (Lori Owenby, m. obs.); one at the Simpson Research Station, Anderson Co, SC, 1-2 May (Imtiaz Haque); two in a wheat field along the Mitchell River in Surry Co, NC, 2 May (Joe Mickey); one in Mills River, Henderson Co, NC, 4-5 May (Ron Selvey, m. obs.); one in the Sandy Mush Game Land, Buncombe Co, NC, 5 May (Chris Henline, David Stewart); one in south Burlington, Alamance Co, NC, 9-13 May (Rebecca Dellinger-Johnston, m. obs.); one over Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 15 May (David McLean, Julie Mobley); and one in Kannapolis, Cabarrus Co, NC, 21-23 May (Mandy Crivello, m. obs.)

Black-necked Stilt: One photographed along Muddy Creek in Forsyth Co, NC, 7 Apr (Donald Kautz, m. obs.) was a great find for an inland site and likely the same individual seen the next day at the nearby Archie Elledge WTP, Forsyth Co, NC, 8 Apr (John Haire). One seen at the upper end of Lake Wheeler, Wake Co, NC, 14 May (Phil Doerr, Clyde Sorenson) was also a great find for an inland site.

American Avocet: One photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 26 May (Sam Cooper) was unusual for that area.

Black-bellied Plover: Five along Hooper Lane in Henderson Co, NC, 14 May (David Williams, et al.) were noteworthy for the mountain region in spring.

American Golden-Plover: Atypically, all sightings this spring were made at sites along the coast. Individuals were seen at Savannah NWR, Jasper Co, SC, 23 Mar (Dave Spangenburg) and 25 Mar (Cindy Groff); at Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center (restricted access), Georgetown Co, SC, 25 Mar through 29 Apr (Jamie Dozier); on the spit at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 7 Apr (Greg Massey) and 23 Apr (Jamie Adams); at the Rachel Carson Reserve, Carteret Co, NC, 11 Apr (John Fussell, et al.) and 17 Apr (Martin Wall); and at the KOA Campground in Waves, Dare Co, NC, 24-28 May (Jesse Anderson, m. obs.).

Wilson's Plover: One seen at the north end of Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 29 Apr (Jeff Lewis) through 27 May (Dan Belter, et al.) was unusual for that area.

Upland Sandpiper: Up to three were seen at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 3-7 Apr (m. obs.). Individuals at Rocky Mount-Wilson Regional Airport, Nash Co, NC, 18 Apr (Ricky Davis) and along Hooper Ln in Henderson Co, NC, 13 May (Denise Hargrove) were also good finds for the spring season.

Whimbrel: A few of the higher counts were 161 on Bird Shoal, Rachel Carson Reserve, Carteret Co, NC, 27 Apr (John Fussell); 320 on Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 28 Apr (Carl Miller); and 215 at Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 20 May (Ricky Davis).

Dunlin: Two photographed at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 10 Apr (Gary Harbour, Michael Robertson), as well as two photographed along Short Dog Drive in Iredell Co, NC, 23 Apr (Ron Underwood, et al.), were good finds for inland sites in spring.

Purple Sandpiper: Individuals photographed on the beach near the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 5 Apr (Martin Wall) and near the ferry terminal at the east end of Ocracoke Island, Hyde Co, NC, 8 Apr (Greg Hudson) were unusual for those sites.

White-rumped Sandpiper: A few of the higher counts were 28 at Prater Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 25 May (George McHenry, m. obs.); 17 at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 26 May (Kevin Kubach); and 15 along Hooper Ln in Henderson Co, NC, 28 May (Simon Thompson).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 70+ along Hooper Ln in Henderson Co, NC, 28 May (Simon Thompson) and 150 along NC-191 in Mills River, Henderson Co, NC, 28 May (Aaron Steed) were noteworthy counts for the mountain region.

Short-billed Dowitcher: Two photographed at Charles D. Owen Park, Buncombe Co, NC, 11 May (Al Hooks) were good finds for the mountain region.

Solitary Sandpiper: One photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, 2 Mar (Jo Anne Keasler, m. obs.) was early.

Willet: Five photographed at Lake Robinson, Greenville Co, SC, 11 May (Jo Anne Keasler) was a noteworthy count for an inland site. Also at inland sites were individuals photographed at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 24 Apr (Stacy Barbour, m. obs.) and at Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 5 May (Mike Conway, m. obs.).

Wilson's Phalarope: An adult female photographed on private property in northeast Beaufort Co, SC, 7 Apr (Chris Marsh, et al.) was a great find for spring and somewhat early.

Red-necked Phalarope: Sightings included one on North Pond, Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 5-7 May (Alan MacEachren, m. obs.); two on North Pond, 6 May (Lucas Bobay, et al.); one at a pond along Ossi Court in Guilford Co, NC, 21-22 May (Brenda Hiles-Hurt, m. obs.); one at Lake Crabtree, Wake Co, NC, 22 May (Eddie Owens); and two at Lake Crabtree, 23-34 May (m. obs.).

South Polar Skua: Individuals were seen on only two of the 15 pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, this spring, on 22 May and 10 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger: 19-20 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 22 May (Brian Patteson, et al.), when winds were out of the southeast, was a good one-day count. One off Coquina Beach, Dare Co, NC, 3 May (Lucas Bobay, Neil Skoog) was a notable sighting from shore. A sick or injured individual was seen on the spit at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 25 May (Greg Massey).

Parasitic Jaeger: Five off New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 4 Apr (Andrew Rapp) was a good from-shore count.

Razorbill: One off the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Mar (Martin Wall), and two there 11 Mar (Travis Marceron), were unusual for a site away from the ocean. One at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Apr (Sam Cooper) was late.

Black-headed Gull: An adult was seen and photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 24 Mar (Sam Cooper) and 25 Mar (Jamie Adams).

Laughing Gull: Two adults at Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 30 Apr (Simon Thompson) were unusual for the mountain region, probably the same two adults seen at Lake Junaluska, Haywood Co, NC, the next day, 1 May (Kirk Gardner, m. obs.).

Glaucous Gull: An immature bird was seen and photographed at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 3-4 Mar (Matt Spangler, m. obs.).

Brown Noddy: One was well-seen and photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 31 May (Brian Patteson, et al.). Patteson notes that this sighting was “our first good look with photos aboard the Stormy Petrel II (or, since 2003).”

Bridled Tern: Bridled Terns were seen on nine of the 15 pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 20 May through 10 Jun, with a total of 32+ seen (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Roseate Tern: Rarely seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, a Roseate Tern was seen and photographed 22 May (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Arctic Tern: Pending review by the NC BRC was the report of an Arctic Tern on Falls Lake off Sandling Beach, Wake Co, NC, during its Spring Bird Count, 25 May (Brian Bockhahn, m. obs.) and continuing 26 May (Ed Corey). Nine on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 22 May (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a good one-day total.

Red-billed Tropicbird: An adult was seen and photographed at the Salt Pond at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 2 Apr (Michael Gosselin, Andrew Thornton). Interestingly, this typically pelagic species has now been seen at Cape Point during the spring season for five of the past nine years. An immature bird was well-seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 1 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: One on Lake Townsend, Guilford Co, NC, 30 Mar through 1 Apr (Henry Link, m. obs.) was noteworthy for an inland lake.

Pacific Loon: One was seen off Johnnie Mercer's Pier, New Hanover Co, NC, 27 Mar (Sam Cooper).

Black-capped Petrel: 200+ on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 21 May (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a nice total for May.

Fea's Petrel: Individuals were seen on two of the 15 pelagic trips in late May and early June, on 22 May and 2 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: Three in flight off Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 22 May (Michael Gosselin) were good finds from shore.

Sooty Shearwater: 18 off Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 22 May (Michael Gosselin) was the highest count made from shore this spring.

Great Shearwater: 170 on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 9 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.) was a noteworthy total.

Audubon's Shearwater: Between 400 and 600, most of which were feeding in the Sargassum on the edge of the Gulf Stream, seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 30 May (Brian Patteson, et al.) was an amazing total.

European Storm-Petrel: One was well-seen and photographed on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 21 May (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel: One was well-seen and photographed as it visited a chum slick intermittently for over an hour during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 9 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.), providing NC with its fourth documented record, and first since June 2009.

Magnificent Frigatebird: An immature bird was photographed over Seabrook Island, Charleston Co, SC, 27 May (Jake Zadik).

Masked Booby: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 9 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Brown Booby: A first-year individual was photographed at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 22 May (Michael Gosselin). An adult was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, Dare Co, NC, 3 Jun (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Northern Gannet: Up to six over the Neuse River near Minnesott Beach, Pamlico Co, NC, 12-24 Mar (Pauline Sterin) were unusual for an area so far from the ocean.

American White Pelican: The spring's high count was 87 over Awendaw, Charleston Co, SC, 13 Apr (Charles Donnelly). Locally unusual were three at Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, 1 Apr (Mark Kosiewski) and nine in the Davis Impoundment, Carteret Co, NC, 3 Mar (Martin Wall). 18 at Mattamuskeet NWR, Hyde Co, NC, 26 May (Susan Campbell) were somewhat late for that area.

“Great White Heron”: A white morph Great Blue Heron was seen and photographed in the Horsepen Creek arm of Lake Brandt, Guilford Co, NC, 25-29 May (Henry Link, m. obs.).

Snowy Egret: Individuals photographed at Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 1-2 May (David Palmer, m. obs.) and along the Johns River in Burke Co, NC, 7 May (Al Hooks) were good finds for sites in the western part of our region.

Little Blue Heron: An immature bird photographed along the New River at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, NC, 24 Apr (Guy McGrane) was very unusual for the northern mountains.

Reddish Egret: An adult bird photographed on the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 29 Apr (Lisa Tucci) was a good find.

Cattle Egret: One seen near the dam on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir in Wilkes Co, NC, 24 May (Guy McGrane) was very unusual for the northwestern part of our region.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: One seen and heard calling at The Park at Flat Rock, Henderson Co, NC, 22 May (Ron Selvey) was a good find for spring.

Alder Flycatcher: One audio recorded along the Moss Creek Nature Trail in Cabarrus Co, NC, 14 May (Ken Kneidel) was a great find for a site outside the mountains.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 16 Mar (Steve Calver) provided the eighth documented record for the state and was relatively late compared most sightings made in the Carolinas.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: An adult male had returned to the traditional nesting site along Gunter Rd in Greenville Co, SC, by 7 May (Miles Groff). An individual photographed along Vienna Dozier Rd in Forsyth Co, NC, 15 May (Nathan & Sarah Gatto) was a first for that county.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: Pending review by the SC BRC was the report with photographs of an apparent immature Fork-tailed Flycatcher at Dobbins Farm in Anderson Co, SC, 21 May (Imitaz Haque). If accepted, this report would provide SC with its third documented record.

Warbling Vireo: Individuals seen and heard on a Breeding Bird Survey route in Martin Co, NC, 28 May (Merrill Lynch) and in Waterlily, Currituck Co, NC, 28 May (Jeff Lewis) were unusual for the eastern part of our region and also somewhat late.

Common Raven: One at Clemmons Educational State Forest, Johnston Co, NC, 25 Mar (David Williams) was the eastern-most sighting made this spring.

Cliff Swallow: One seen around the end of the Bogue Inlet Pier, Carteret Co, NC, 12 Mar (Martin Wall) was very early. Ten around a bridge along US-74 in Andrews, Cherokee Co, NC, 22 Apr (Simon Thompson) were unusual for that area, probably nesting there. Nesting was noted for the first time on the NC-210 bridge over the Northeast Cape Fear River in Pender Co, NC, where two were first seen 28 Apr (David Weesner) and eight active nests were seen there 27 May (Sam Cooper).

Barn Swallow: Individuals at River Park North, Pitt Co, NC, 4 Mar (Aaron Steed) and along Wendell Falls Parkway in Wake Co, NC, 9 Mar (David Williams) were somewhat early.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Individuals lingered until late May at two sites along the coast—at Cape Lookout, Carteret Co, NC, until 21 May (Martin Wall, et al.) and at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, until 26 May (Audrey Whitlock).

Wood Thrush: One heard singing at Durant Nature Preserve, Wake Co, NC, 23 Mar (Dennis Parslow) was somewhat early to return.

American Pipit: 1000 in agricultural fields at the intersection of NC-205 and New Salem Rd in Union Co, NC, 18 Mar (Chris Hill) was a noteworthy count.

Evening Grosbeak: A female seen and photographed at a feeder near Mayodan, Rockingham Co, NC, 24-29 Apr (Cara & Tony Woods) was our region's first sighting since the minor irruption that occurred during the winter of 2012/2013.

Snow Bunting: One was photographed on a small island in the Pamlico Sound just southeast of Oregon Inlet, Dare Co, NC, 22 Mar (Edye Kornegay, et al.).

Louisiana Waterthrush: One seen in the Holly Shelter Game Land, Pender Co, NC, 22 Apr (David Weesner) may have been attempting to breed in the area, as it was rather late for a migrant. This species does not typically breed at sites so near the coast.

Connecticut Warbler: An adult male was heard singing and briefly seen at Lake Conestee Nature Park, Greenville Co, SC, 14 May (Jeff Click, et al.). Another adult male was seen and recorded singing at the Hospital Fields in Brevard, Transylvania Co, NC, 22 May (Mike Judd, Michale Plauché).

Mourning Warbler: An adult male was seen, photographed, and heard singing at Reynolda Gardens, Forsyth Co, NC, 10 May (Travis Marceron). Another individual was heard singing on a farm in the northern tip of Watauga Co, NC, 13 May (Merrill Lynch). Most exciting though was the discovery of an adult male singing on territory along the Blue Ridge Parkway near the Linn Cove Viaduct in Avery Co, NC, 20 May (Lynch, et al.), where it was seen and photographed by many

through 21 Jun (Steve Coggin). As expected, the warbler never found a mate despite its near-constant singing.

Cape May Warbler: Ten at Latta Park, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 30 Apr (Taylor Piephoff, et al.) was a great count for a site outside of the mountains.

Cerulean Warbler: One recorded singing at Mayo River SP, Rockingham Co, NC, 14 May (Martin Wall) was locally unusual.

Northern Parula: One photographed at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 6 Mar (Martin Wall) was somewhat early for a site in NC.

Blackpoll Warbler: An adult male photographed at the Hospital Fields in Brevard, Transylvania Co, NC, 21 Apr (Michael Plauché) was somewhat early.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: An adult male photographed at Ray's Mill Park in Aberdeen, Moore Co, NC, 4 Mar (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton) must have been over-wintering in that area, as it was much too early for a returning spring migrant.

Black-throated Green Warbler: An adult male seen and recorded singing at Silver Bluff Audubon Center, Aiken Co, SC, 18 Mar (Meghan Oberkircher) was early.

Bachman's Sparrow: One seen in a thinned Longleaf Pine forest along the Cross City Trail in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Apr (Sam Cooper) was locally unusual.

Vesper Sparrow: One seen at Pondberry Bay Preserve in northern Sampson Co, NC, 4 Mar (David Williams) was locally unusual.

Lark Sparrow: Sightings were made at three sites in the NC Sandhills—one in the Sandhills Game Land in Richmond Co, 9 Apr (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton); four on Ft Bragg Military Reservation in Hoke Co, 7 May (Rex Badgett, et al); one in the Sandhills Game Land in Scotland Co, 21 May (Beane, Horton); and three in that same area 27 May (Beane, Horton).

Savannah Sparrow: A singing male lingered along Hooper Ln in Henderson Co, NC, until 28 May (Simon Thompson), but was not seen thereafter.

Le Conte's Sparrow: One was seen in the Pine Island Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 26 Mar (Harold Donnelly).

Nelson's Sparrow: Individual migrants on the campus of Western Carolina University, Jackson Co, NC, 12 May (Jeremy Hyman) and at the Prairie Restoration Site at McDowell Nature Preserve, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 14 May (Kevin Metcalf) were good finds for those inland sites.

Seaside Sparrow: 150 along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 16 Apr (Martin Wall, et al.) was a noteworthy count.

White-crowned Sparrow: Four at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 29 Apr (Sam Cooper) were unusual for that site in spring. One in the

agricultural fields around Warren Wilson College, Buncombe Co, NC, 20 May (Simon Thompson) and 30 May (Kirk Gardner) was late.

Western Tanager: An adult male was briefly seen at Airle Gardens, New Hanover Co, NC, 25 Mar (Jamie Adams).

Painted Bunting: An adult male photographed at a feeder just northeast of New Bern, Craven Co, NC, 9 Mar (Dana Miller) probably over-wintered in the area. One, either a female or first-year male, photographed at a feeder on Cherry Ln in Alamance Co, NC, 8-9 May (Susan Miller) was unusual for the NC Piedmont.

Dickcissel: Singing males were on territory along Old Mountain Rd in western Iredell Co, NC, 29 Apr into summer (Monroe Pannell); at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, by 7 May (John Fussell, et al.); at Dobbins Farm in Anderson Co, SC, 12 May (Hunter Kome) into summer, with a high count of 13 there 20 May (George McHenry); along Blue Banks Loop Rd in Brunswick Co, NC, 13 May (Mark Whitaker) through 17 Jun (Sam Cooper), with a high count of four there 18 May (David Weesner); along Baldwin Rd in Guilford Co, NC, 15 May (Martin Wall) into summer, with a high count of seven there 29 May (Andrew Thornton); along Howerton Rd in Guilford Co, NC, 15 May (Wall) into summer, with a high count of six there 20 May (Thornton); and in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 20 May (Irvin Pitts) into summer (m. obs.).

Bobolink: Two males seen at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge, Mecklenburg Co, NC, 8 Apr (Ron Clark) were somewhat early. Up to eight were seen at a traditional breeding site in central Watauga Co, NC, in late May (m. obs.). A male in Mills River, Henderson Co, NC, 29 May (Simon Thompson) was late, possibly attempting to breed in that area.

Shiny Cowbird: An adult male visited the feeders behind the museum at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 25 May into summer (Martin Wall, m. obs.). Though dozens of sightings were made in the Carolinas in the 1990s and 2000s, it had been eight years since the previous sighting of this tropical species in our region.

Corrigenda: The location given for the Little Blue Heron sighting included in the Fall 2016 "Briefs for the Files" was misleading. Though the sighting was made at Trout Lake in Watauga County, it was made at the Trout Lake on Powder Horn Mountain at 1800 feet above sea level, not at the more well-known Trout Lake at Moses H. Cone Memorial Park at 3800 feet above sea level.

Fifty Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz

1967. The Summer of Love. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band by the Beatles ruled the airwaves. U.S. involvement in Vietnam increased so that by year's end, 475,000 troops were in Southeast Asia. The average price of a new home was \$14,250 and gasoline cost just 33 cents a gallon; but of course the average annual wage was lower as well, as \$7,300. The Carolina Bird Club offered annual dues at \$2 per year. With dues now at \$30 for individuals, dues paid annually have increased 1,400%. And while that might seem like a large increase, consider that in 1967 a Life Membership cost \$100. Today that membership costs \$500, an increase of only 400%. Considering the relative value of a Life Membership, does it make sense to convert your annual membership to a Life Membership? See <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/dues/> for details.

The Summer 1967 issue of The Chat included results of a study on the dive times of common waterbirds including Horned Grebe (mean dive time of 46.1 seconds) and Bufflehead (mean dive times of 20.3 and 25.6 seconds on separate study days) based on observations in South Carolina by Joseph and Elaine Fatora.

General Field Notes documented the increase in House Finch records in the Carolinas, with the species first noted by Eloise Potter in November 1962 at Zebulon, NC. By 1967 the species was still quite uncommon, with four records from NC and two from SC during the winter of 1966-1967. This included the first SC record, a sighting made at Greenville.

Briefs for the Files noted 17 Ring-billed Gulls found in Winston-Salem on 25 February 1967 as being uncommon for an inland location. One might expect many inland fast food restaurants could equal or exceed that figure today on any given winter afternoon! A harbinger of future wintering hummingbird records, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird was noted from Beaufort, NC on 31 January 1967. A young birder by the name of Derb Carter, Jr. found a Glossy Ibis in Fayetteville, NC on 24 September 1966, while another frequent future contributor to Carolinas birding knowledge, Harry LeGrand, spotted what was then known as an American Merganser near Raleigh, NC on 12 February 1967.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

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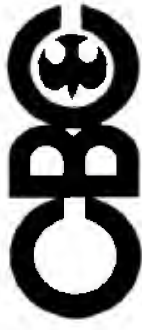
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The Chat

Quarterly Bulletin of Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
1909 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612



Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pinehurst, NC 28374 and
additional mailing offices

The Chat

Vol. 81

Fall 2017

No. 4



The Quarterly Bulletin of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
The Ornithological Society of the Carolinas

THE CHAT

ISSN No. 0009-1987

Vol. 81

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Editor

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THE CHAT is published quarterly by the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374. Subscription price \$30 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Pinehurst, NC and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE CHAT, Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 9 Quincy Place, Pinehurst NC 28374.

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Cover: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, July 2017, New Hanover County, NC
Photo by Sam Cooper

Use of Hornet Nests for Winter Roosting by the Carolina Wren in the Southeastern United States

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The Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) is one of several species of wrens found in the Carolinas. This small-bodied bird is found year-round through much of the eastern United States and south into Mexico (Peterson and Peterson 2002). It is the only wren in eastern North America that does not migrate to warmer climates in the winter (Sibley 2000). This overwintering habit makes the species vulnerable to harsh winter temperatures, particularly in the mountains of the Carolinas and in the northern portion of the bird's range. Many researchers have concluded from studies in the colder portions of its range that winter survival is directly related to low temperatures (Brooks 1936; Root 1988; Link and Sauer 2007). Other researchers have suggested that it might be linked to the availability of food resources (Job and Bednekoff 2011). Ultimately, both factors contribute to the bird's range, and changes in climate temperature have been directly correlated to the gradual northward range expansion of the species (Job and Bednekoff 2011).

In the mountains of Rutherford County, North Carolina, we have frequently observed an interesting phenomenon that may contribute to the winter survival of Carolina Wrens. After the autumn killing frosts, we encounter large nests of the Bald-faced Hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*) with one or more holes approximately 10 cm in diameter torn into the side (Fig. 1). There are often remnants of bird scat near the opening (Fig. 2), and the hollowed out cavity is generally substantially larger inside. We believe that Carolina Wrens tear these holes into the

hornet nests; on winter nights, one or more can often be found roosting in the well-insulated cavities (Fig. 3).



Figure 1. Bald-faced Hornet nest hung under the shelter of a porch roof with hole made by a Carolina Wren for winter roosting.

The thick, paper-like walls built by the hornets during the summer months are very insulating and apparently help the wrens to withstand low winter temperatures. Every year for the last ten years, we have collected one or more large Bald-faced Hornet nests and hung them under the roof of a porch. We have yet to observe a winter during which one or more wrens have not roosted in the hornet nest. Although this roosting behavior appears to be common, at least in our region, it has seldom been reported in the literature. West Virginia

naturalist Professor Maurice Brooks reported that in the fall of 1927, a hornet nest was hung in an outbuilding, and by late winter, a pair of Carolina Wrens was regularly roosting there and continued to do so for the next five winters (Brooks 1932). In Ohio in 1932, Louis B. Kalter reported seeing a Carolina Wren using a hornet nest that had been placed on a porch as a winter roosting place; Kalter comments: "This may be an entirely new and individualistic adaptation of the Carolina Wren to man's civilization, or it may indicate one type of its normal winter roosting place" (Kalter 1932). These two reports from 1932 in West Virginia and Ohio are the only published accounts we have found that outline this behavior in Carolina Wrens. There are other accounts of these wrens roosting in different insulated items such as coat pockets, shirts on a clothesline, folds in curtains, etc (Members 1943; Bent 1948).



Figure 2.
Carolina
Wren scats
around the
opening of a
winter roost
in a Bald-
faced Hornet
nest.

It is apparent from these formerly published notes and our observations that this winter roosting behavior is likely far more widespread among Carolina Wrens than has been previously reported. Bald-faced Hornets are widely distributed in North America (Milne and Milne 1980), and in the colder portions of the Carolina Wren’s range, they may play a vital role in the bird’s ability to overwinter. Further research is needed to understand how widespread and important this roosting behavior is among Carolina Wrens and other related bird species. It is also necessary for data to be collected regarding this behavior where hornet nests have been left in the wild and have not been moved to sheltered environments by humans.



Figure 3.
Carolina
Wren roosting
inside a well-
insulated
Bald-faced
Hornet nest
on a cold
winter night.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2017, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events that do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **Co** – County, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: Two seen at a farm pond in the northeast corner of Craven Co, NC, 21 Jun (Lester Coble) may have been the same pair photographed at a small pond in Emerald Isle, Carteret Co, NC, a few

days earlier, 17 Jun (Kathleen Johnston). Also in NC was one photographed at a small pond in Wilmington, New Hanover Co, 15 Jul (Sam Cooper, m. obs.)

Tundra Swan: One lingering in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, Washington Co, NC, 25 Jun (Ricky Davis) must not have been able to migrate back north.

Mottled Duck: One photographed along the Basin Trail at Ft Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC, 1 Jun (Jamie Adams) was a good find for NC.

Blue-winged Teal: Two, a drake and a hen, photographed at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 19 Jun (George McHenry) through 21 Jun (Andy Norris) were unusual for June.

Redhead: An adult drake photographed near the dam on Lake Wateree, Kershaw Co, SC, 27 Jul (Steve Patterson) was very unusual for the summer period.

Ring-necked Duck: An adult drake summered at Salem Lake, Forsyth Co, NC, again this year (m. obs.).

Common Eider: Very unusual for the summer period was a pair, a drake and a hen, seen and photographed at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, 10 Jul (Peter Stangel) through 25 Aug (Richard Poort). This pair may have been part of the group of three eiders that lingered at this site in late May. These sightings were the first ever made of a Common Eider in SC during the months of July or August.

Black Scoter: 19 at the south end of Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, 7 Jun (Peter Bergseon) and 16 around Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 26 Jun (David McLean) were good counts for the summer period. Other summer sightings included three off North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 1 Jun (Gilbert Grant); three at the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, Carteret Co, NC, 2 Jun (Bob Lockett, et al.); three at the south end of Bodie Island, Dare Co, NC, 6 Jun (Paul Doshkov); two at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 15 Jun (Martin Wall) and 23 Jun (Jesse Anderson); ten at Breach Inlet, Charleston Co, SC, throughout much of June (Elizabeth Anderegg, m. obs.); five at Folly Beach, Charleston Co, SC, 14 Jul (Keith McCullough, et al.); and up to six at Murrells Inlet, Georgetown Co, SC, throughout the period (m. obs.).

Ruddy Duck: Individual adult drakes at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jun (Steve Calver) and at the WTP in Hemingway, Williamsburg Co, SC, 24 Jun (Jay Chandler, Pam Ford) and 3 Jul (Catherine & Jay Gamble) were unusual for the summer period.

Pied-billed Grebe: This species bred at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, this summer. A total of eight grebes, including two singing adult males, one female, and five juvenile grebes, were seen there 16 Jul (John Fussell, et al.). Fussell notes that the impoundment where the grebes bred was only about a month old.

Horned Grebe: A breeding-plumaged adult in the Middle Marshes section of the Rachel Carson Reserve, Carteret Co, NC, 12 Jun (John Fussell, Paula Gillikin) was late to depart.

Common Ground-Dove: Breeding took place at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, at about the northern limit of the species' current range on the east coast. After a female was photographed on a nest, 27 Jul (Frank Lawkins), two juveniles were seen in the nest 15 Aug (Lawkins) and had fledged by 22 Aug (Sam Miller).

White-winged Dove: One was photographed at a feeder in a yard on James Island, Charleston Co, SC, 4 Jun (Barbara Spence).

Chuck-will's-widow: One heard calling in Ela, Swain Co, NC, 1 Jun (Charles Lawson) was unusual for the mountain region. Lawson notes that he also heard one calling at a nearby site in northwest Jackson Co, NC, throughout the summers of 2015 and 2016.

Black Rail: Up to three were heard calling along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, throughout the period (m. obs.). At least one was heard calling at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 23 Jun (Cherrie Sneed) through 23 Jul (Andy Harrison), with two being heard there 26 Jun (Elizabeth Anderegg) and 1 Jul (David Williams).

Sora: An adult found at Valle Crucis Community Park. Watauga Co, NC, 6 Jul (Robin Diaz) was very unusual for mid-summer. Amazingly, two Soras were reported at that site 18 Jul (Guy McGrane, Judi Sawyer, et al.), one of which some observers say resembled a juvenile Sora. Unfortunately only photos of the adult were obtained, leaving the species' breeding status in NC still unconfirmed.

Purple Gallinule: Breeding took place at Brick Pond Park, Aiken Co, SC, a site farther than inland than most documented breeding sites in the Carolinas, evidenced by an adult seen with four chicks, 1 Jul (Kathy Steele).

Common Gallinule: Breeding took place at the constructed wetland near the WTP in Goldsboro, Wayne Co, NC, evidenced by an adult seen with three chicks, 2 Jul (Ricky Davis) and 16 Jul (David Williams).

American Coot: Breeding took place at the retention pond at Concord Mills, Cabarrus Co, NC, evidenced by two adults photographed with five juveniles, 27 Jun (Jeff Lemons). This sighting provides the first record of breeding by this species in the Piedmont.

Limpkin: Individuals photographed at Lake Greenwood near Waterloo, Laurens Co, SC, 3 Jul (Jonas Younts) and along the Great Pee Dee River near Yauhannah, Georgetown Co, SC, 8 Jul (Mark Johnson) were, amazingly, the third and fourth Limpkins photographed in 2017 in SC, a state with only about a dozen total sightings prior to 2017.

Sandhill Crane: An adult photographed on Johns Island, Charleston Co, SC, 31 Jul (Jake Zadik, et al.) was unusual for the summer period.

Black-necked Stilt: Rare inland sightings involved two at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 1-5 Jun (Scott Davis, m. obs.); three at Horse Creek WTP (restricted access), Aiken Co, SC, 8 Jul (Dennis Forsythe); and 14 at the same site 11 Jul (Kent Bedenbaugh). The species likely bred at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, this summer, with sightings of up to seven birds made there throughout the period (m. obs.).

American Avocet: Inland sightings included three photographed at the WTP in Hemmingway, Williamsburg Co, SC, 20 Jul (Jay Chandler); one at Lake Hartwell near Clemson, Pickens Co, SC, 24 Jul (Kevin Kubach); and one at the WTP in Goldsboro, Wayne Co, NC, 30 Jul (Lucas Bobay).

Snowy Plover: One photographed on a sandbar near the south end of Lea-Hutaff Island, Pender Co, NC, 31 Jul (George Stubbs) was probably the same individual seen around Rich Inlet for the past couple of summers.

Wilson's Plover: 59 around New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 20 Jul (Gilbert Grant), and 49 at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 22 Jul (Sam Cooper) were good counts.

Upland Sandpiper: "Uppies" began passing through the Carolinas in late July, with two photographed at the Bucksport Sod Farm in Horry Co, SC, 27 Jul (Chris Hill, John Hutchens) and one photographed in the grass around Wilmington International Airport, New Hanover Co, NC, 27 Jul (Sam Cooper).

Hudsonian Godwit: One photographed at Pea Island NWR, Dare Co, NC, 30 Jul (Karen Lebing) was somewhat early.

Red Knot: 168 in a single flock at the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, 30 Jul (Martha Mayo, John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy count for summer.

Stilt Sandpiper: One photographed at New River Inlet, Onslow Co, NC, 6 Jul (Gilbert Grant) was somewhat early.

Short-billed Dowitcher: One photographed at Simpson Research Station in Anderson Co, SC, 20-21 Jul (George McHenry) was a good find for a site so far from the coast.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Long-billed Dowitcher at Osceola Lake, Henderson Co, NC, 23 Jul (Ron Selvey, Wayne Forsythe). If accepted, the report would become the first documented record of this species in the NC mountains.

Willet: Two eastern-race birds photographed at Falls Lake in Durham Co, NC, 10 Jun (John Hammond, Thomas Hopkins) were extremely unusual for an inland site during the month of June.

Wilson's Phalarope: One was photographed near the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper So, SC, 19 Jul (Steve Calver).

South Polar Skua: One seen in flight over the ocean from the bathhouse area at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis) was a real surprise, as this species is very rarely seen from shore.

Pomarine Jaeger: A dark-phase adult Pomarine Jaeger was seen over the ocean from Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Seven distinct immature birds photographed in Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 23-27 Jul (Bob Lewis) was a notable count for that area in summer. An immature bird at Mason Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Jun (Sam Cooper) and at nearby Masonboro Inlet, 30 Jun (David Weesner) was also unusual for summer.

Caspian Tern: Two in flight over Lake Julian, Buncombe Co, NC, 27 Jun (Simon Thompson) were very unusual for an inland site in late June. Were these birds late spring migrants or were they early fall migrants?

Black Tern: 81 on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 26 Jun (David McLean) was a notable count for late June.

Roseate Tern: Individuals photographed on the beach just south of Carova Beach, Currituck Co, NC, 23 Jun (Lucy Jacobson) and in flight over Bogue Inlet from Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 5 Jul (Martin Wall) were great finds.



Roseate Tern, 5 Jul 2017,
Carteret Co, NC
Photo by Martin Wall

Red-throated Loon: One in flight over North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 1 Jun (Gilbert Grant) was late to depart.

Cory's Shearwater: 24 seen flying east off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis) was a notable from-shore count.

Sooty Shearwater: From-shore sightings included one off Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 7 Jun (Andrew Thornton) and two off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis).

Great Shearwater: 155 off Ft. Macon

SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis) was a fantastic from-shore count, probably the highest count ever made in that county. Around that same time, a

wildlife rehabilitator in Brunswick Co, NC, took in 30 emaciated Great Shearwaters found on area beaches over the course of a week (*fide* David Weesner). Also seen from shore were individuals at Indian Beach, Carteret Co, NC, 13 Jun (Chad Pumpelly); at Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jun (Michael Gosselin); at Wrightsville Beach, New Hanover Co, NC, 18 Jun (Sam Cooper); over the Newport River estuary, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Vicky Thayer); at Capers Island, Charleston Co, SC, 19 Jun (Joe Magura); and at North Topsail Beach, Onslow Co, NC, 19 Jul (Gilbert Grant).

Manx Shearwater: One was seen among the flight of shearwaters off Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, following several days of southerly winds, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis). A sick or injured individual was photographed on the east end of Holden Beach, Brunswick Co, NC, 19 Jun (Malcolm Chesworth).

Wilson's Storm-Petrel: From shore, two were seen from Cape Point, Dare Co, NC, 16 Jun (Michael Gosselin) and two were seen from Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 18 Jun (Ricky Davis).

Wood Stork: Individuals at Biltmore Estate, Buncombe Co, NC, where photographed, 1 Jun (Bill Alexander); in flight over NC-152 in Rowan Co, NC, 11 Jun (Issac Kerns); and at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, where

photographed, 25 Jun (Linda Montgomery) were unusual for sites so far inland in June. One photographed at Palmetto Peartree Preserve, Tyrell Co, NC, 8 Jul (Alicia Jackson) was unusual for a site so far north. 24 at a farm in Jones Co, NC, 3 Jul (Clancy Ballenger) and 57 in flight over Chocowinity, Beaufort Co, NC, 3 Jul (Cody Stone) were notable counts for those areas. 375 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton Co, SC, 16 Jul (David Youngblood) was our region's high count.

Magnificent Frigatebird: Sightings included an immature bird photographed over Pine Knoll Shores, Carteret Co, NC, 22 Jun (David & Susan Disher); one over Rantowles Creek in Charleston Co, SC, 23 Jun (Dennis Forsythe); one photographed over Hampstead, Pender Co, NC, 8 Jul (Gwyn Marie); two immature birds photographed over Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, 8 Jul (Scott Mullens); an immature bird photographed in Calabash, Brunswick Co, NC, 15 Jul (Neil Jernigan); and an adult female over the ocean at Rodanthe, Dare Co, NC, 25 Jul (Josh Auld).

Great Cormorant: An immature bird lingered at Masonboro Inlet, New Hanover Co, NC, for most of the summer, until last seen 28 Jul (Sam Cooper).

American White Pelican: 97 at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), Jasper Co, SC, 13 Jun (Steve Calver) was an impressive tally for summer.

Least Bittern: Individuals at Tanglewood Park, Forsyth Co, NC, 7-26 Jun (David Disher, m. obs.) and at Rocky River Nature Park, Anderson Co, SC, 26-27 Jun (Paul Serridge, m. obs.) were good finds for sites in the Piedmont. A very rare dark-morph Least Bittern was reported from Mackay Island NWR, Currituck Co, NC, 25 Jun (David Clark), though unfortunately not photographed. 44, many of which were juvenile birds, along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Jul (John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy count.

Snowy Egret: Farther inland than most sightings was one at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, Gaston Co, NC, 6 Jul (Colleen Snow) through 19 Jul (Keith Camburn); one photographed at Beaverdam Creek WMA, Anderson Co, SC, 18 Jul (George McHenry); and one photographed at Old Kernersville Lake Park, Forsyth Co, NC, 21 Jul through 11 Aug (Marbry Hopkins, m. obs.)

Reddish Egret: At the east end of Shackleford Banks, Carteret Co, NC, one of the more reliable sites to find the species in NC, one dark-morph adult was seen 19 Jul (Martin Wall) and two dark-morph adults were seen 30 Jul (Steven Howell, et al.). Also in NC were two immature dark-morph birds photographed together on the east end of Sunset Beach, Brunswick Co, 27 Jul (Bob Lewis).

Glossy Ibis: 83 at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, 16 Jul (John Fussell, et al.) was a noteworthy count for that area.

White-faced Ibis: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an adult White-faced Ibis photographed at a pond in Camden, Kershaw Co, SC, 24

Jun (Steve Patterson). If accepted, this sighting would become the first accepted record of this species in SC.

Roseate Spoonbill: An immature spoonbill photographed at a small pond near Plymouth, Washington Co, NC, 21 Jun (Kimberly McCargo) was a first for the northern tidewater region of NC. In Brunswick Co, the county in NC where most sightings occur, two were photographed on Oak Island, 30 Jun (Gail Capel) and one was seen in Sunset Beach, 25 Jul (Bob Lewis) into fall (m. obs.). 15 at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 27 Jul (Paul Serridge, m. obs.) was a notable count for that site.

Swallow-tailed Kite: 300 over agricultural fields near the intersection of SC-125 and Millett Rd in Allendale Co, SC, 27 Jul (David Youngblood) was an amazing total. 12 over fields along SC-63 northwest of Belton, Anderson Co, SC, 28 Jul (Michael Robertson) was a good count for upstate SC. Three, one of which may have been an immature kite, around the dam on Lake Waccamaw, Columbus Co, NC, 29 Jun (Ed Corey) were suggestive of possible breeding in that area. Locally unusual were individuals over Jordan Lake, Chatham Co, NC, where photographed, 22 Jun (Scott Mullens); just east of Conway, Northampton Co, NC, 26 Jun (Clyde Smith); and just south of New Bern, Craven Co, NC, 12 Jul (John Fussell).

Mississippi Kite: Two active nests were found in Greensboro, Guilford Co, NC, 15 Jul (Henry Link, et al.).

Northern Harrier: Breeding was suspected at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, again this year, because a total of four birds, including two juvenile birds, seen there 2 Jul and 9 Jul (John Fussell, et al.).

Cooper's Hawk: Nesting at sites along the coast has become more common over the past decade. A pair nested in a yard on Sullivan's Island, Charleston Co, SC, for a seventh year in a row, with five juvenile birds seen 30 Jun (Hal Currey, Peggy Schachte). Also at sites along the coast, nesting took place in Kill Devil Hills, Dare Co, NC (*fide* Jeff Lewis); in Manteo, Dare Co, NC (*fide* Lewis); in Corolla, Currituck Co, NC (*fide* Lewis); and in Morehead City, Carteret Co, NC (John Fussell).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: A total of six chicks fledged from three owl boxes along the Pisgah Ridge and in the Balsam Mountains of NC this summer. Three fledged from a box in Haywood Co, 1-3 Jun; two fledged from a box in Transylvania Co, 2-5 Jun; and one fledged from a different box in Haywood Co, 14-15 Jun (Mark Simpson, Marilyn Westphal).

Merlin: One seen along the BRP at mile 357.5 in Buncombe Co, NC, 2 Jun (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) was very unusual for the summer period.

Alder Flycatcher: During the summer, up to five were seen around Black Balsam Knob, Haywood Co, NC (Marilyn Westphal, m. obs.) and up to three were seen around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC (Rick Knight).

Tropical Kingbird: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent Tropical Kingbird at North River Preserve (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, during a Lower Neuse Bird Club field trip, 3 Jun (John Fussell, et al.). The bird was observed for about an hour, photographed, and heard

vocalizing. Subsequent attempts to re-find the bird were unsuccessful. If accepted, this sighting would become the fourth record for NC, and first record from the summer period. Interestingly, all previous sightings were made in the late fall/early winter, at the complete opposite time of year of this sighting.

Gray Kingbird: One was photographed along the Sullivan's Island Nature Trail, Charleston Co, SC, 1 Jul (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.)

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: The adult male seen at the traditional nesting site along Gunter Rd in Greenville Co, SC, throughout May and June, was joined by an adult female and an immature bird 5 Jul (Jane Kramer) and photographed alongside the immature bird 11 Jul (Joan Baker) and 12 Jul (Kevin Kubach). Because a nest was never seen and the adult male was alone for the two previous months, it's likely that the other two flycatchers wandered there from a different site. In nearby Anderson Co, SC, an immature bird was photographed at Dobbins Farm, 8 Jun (George McHenry, m. obs.) and an adult was photographed at Simpson Research Station, 26 Jun (Linda Montgomery). One photographed at Jockey's Ridge SP, Dare Co, NC, 26 Jun (Steve Landes) was very unusual for a site along the coast during the mid-summer.

Warbling Vireo: A singing male found on a BBS route in Camden Co, NC, 4 Jun (Jeff Lewis, Audrey Whitlock) was unusual for a site in the coastal plain. A pair nested at Beaver Lake, Buncombe Co, NC, in early June (Simon Thompson, m. obs.).

Black-whiskered Vireo: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an apparent Black-whiskered Vireo seen and heard singing on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, Charleston Co, SC, 13 Jun (David McLean, Irvin Pitts, Madison Stelljes). If accepted, this sighting would become the first official record of this species in SC.

Cliff Swallow: 1280 at the Modern Turf farm in Rembert, Sumter Co, SC, 17 Jul (Steve Patterson) was a remarkable count.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Individuals in Low Gap, Surry Co, NC, 6 Jul (Eric Harrold) and at Pilot Mountain SP, Surry Co, NC, 8 Jul (Jesse Anderson, et al.) were unusual for sites outside of the mountain region in summer.

Marsh Wren: 75 heard along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, just before dawn, 20 Jul (Martin Wall) was a notable count.

Hermit Thrush: 30 along Wilson Boundary Rd in Yancey Co, NC, 2 Jun (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) was a remarkable count for the breeding season. Up to five were seen around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the period (Rick Knight). An active nest containing four eggs was photographed off the Flat Laurel Branch Trail in Haywood Co, NC, 20 Jun (Chris Kelly).

Cedar Waxwing: Active nests were found at Brookshire Park, Watauga Co, NC, 3 Jun (Al Hooks, et al.); in the Pisgah National Forest in Transylvania Co, NC, 3 Jun (Joan Baker, et al.); along the Summit Trail at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, NC, 12 Jun (Marilyn Westphal, et al.); and at

Mt Pisgah Campground, Haywood Co, NC, 27 Jun (Westphal). Waxwings were also seen carrying nesting material at multiple sites across North Carolina.

American Pipit: One at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, 22 Jul (Brian Barchus, Scott Davis) was unusual for the summer period.

Pine Siskin: A few of the higher counts made in the NC mountains this summer were 30 at Balsam Gap, along the BRP in Buncombe Co, 3 Jun (Kirk Gardner); 15 at Grandfather Gold and Country Club, Avery Co, 28 Jul (Will Johnson); and four or more around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

“Brewster’s Warbler”: A male, singing the typical song of a Golden-winged Warbler, was seen along Max Patch Rd in Haywood Co, NC, 17 Jun (Matthew Moskwik, Roger Shaw) and 4 Jul (Kirk Gardner). Gardner notes there were also two Golden-winged Warblers at the site, and there was some interaction between them and the Brewster’s.

Mourning Warbler: The adult male first discovered along the BRP near the Linn Cove Viaduct, Avery Co, NC, 20 May (Lynch, et al.) remained through 21 Jun (Steve Coggin).

Magnolia Warbler: An adult male was seen and heard singing along the Bald Knob Ridge Trail in Yancey Co, NC, 11 Jun (Jeff Click) through 25 Jun (Marilyn Westphal). Up to five males were seen or heard around Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the summer (Rick Knight).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: An adult male photographed at Huntington Beach SP, Georgetown Co, SC, 15 Jun (Sean Williams) was extremely late. Reports of males on territory at sites in the NC mountains included a singing male along Black Balsam Rd, Haywood Co, 3-15 Jun (Marilyn Westphal); a singing male at Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, 7 and 10 Jun (Rick Knight); an adult male at Clingman’s Dome, Swain Co, 9 Jun (Keith Watson, et al.); and at least three singing males at Mt Mitchell SP, Yancey Co, 12 Jun (Westphal, et al.).

Black-throated Green Warbler: 71 along Wilson Boundary Rd, 5.3 miles from Steps Gap to Balsam Gap, in Yancey Co, NC, 2 Jun (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson) was a noteworthy count.

Eastern Towhee: Previously reported white-eyed race individuals continued at the feeders at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, throughout the period (Martin Wall, m. obs.) and in a yard in Raleigh, Wake Co, NC, 26-28 Jul (Sharon Kennedy).

Vesper Sparrow: An active nest with one egg was found in the Pond Mountain Game Land, Ashe Co, NC, 31 May (Clifton Avery). Six on Big Yellow Mountain, Avery Co, NC, 9 Jun (Merrill Lynch) was a good count. Up to two were seen on Round Bald, Roan Mountain, Mitchell Co, NC, throughout the season (Rick Knight).

Lark Sparrow: After multiple sightings of Lark Sparrows in the Sandhills Game Land in Scotland Co, NC, in late May, an active nest with three eggs was found 24 Jun (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton), with the eggs hatching 1-2 Jul (Beane, Horton) and the juveniles having left the nest by 14 Jul (Beane). This nest is only the second Lark Sparrow nest to be documented in the Carolinas, though there are about seven breeding records based on the presence of juvenile birds. An immature bird was photographed at Pea Island

NWR, Dare Co, NC, 26 Jul (Audrey Whitlock).



Lark Sparrow, 30 Jun 2017, Scotland Co, NC
Photo by Jeff Beane.

Savannah Sparrow: Up to four, including at least one singing male, in a field along Stratford Rd in Alleghany Co, NC, 10-14 Jun (Merrill Lynch, m. obs.) was suggestive of attempted breeding at that site.

Seaside Sparrow: 124, most of which were juvenile birds, along NC-12 at Cedar Island NWR, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Jul (John Fussell, et al.) was a good count.

White-throated Sparrow: An adult photographed at a millet feeder in Henderson Co, NC, 24 Jun (Adam Hull) was very unusual for mid-summer.

Painted Bunting: A singing adult male spent its third summer in a row at Wilson Educational Forest, Wilson Co, NC, a site north of the species' typical range, 22 Apr through 26 Jun (Ann Brice, m. obs.).

Dickcissel: The peak count at North River Farms (limited access), Carteret Co, NC, this year was 15, including 13 singing males, 11 Jun (John Fussell, et al.). Counts at other sites included five, including four singing males, at Alligator River NWR, Dare Co, NC, 5 Jun (Audrey Whitlock); three, including a female seen carrying food, in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR, Clarendon Co, SC, 6 Jun (Brad Sale); two in the agricultural fields near Cherry Hospital in Wayne Co, NC, 2 Jul (Ricky Davis) through 16 Jul (David Williams); six, including a female seen carrying food, at the traditional Dickcissel site just north of Cowpens, Spartanburg Co, NC, 14 Jul (Irvin Pitts); and up to ten at Dobbins Farm, Anderson Co, SC, throughout the period (m. obs.). Individuals photographed along Daisy Thompson Rd in

Person Co, NC, 13 Jun (Simon Thompson) and in the fields around Warren Wilson College, Buncombe Co, NC, 21 Jun (James Poling, m. obs.) were locally unusual.

Bobolink: Three to five singing males in a field along Stratford Rd in Alleghany Co, NC, 10-14 Jun (Merrill Lynch, m. obs.) were suggestive of attempted breeding in that area. A lone female was photographed at Island Ford Landing in Transylvania Co, NC, 10 Jul (Claire Herzog, et al.).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: An adult male photographed at a feeder in Gastonia, Gaston Co, NC, 7 Jun (Cindy Letorney) was very unusual for the summer period, especially for a site away from the coast.



Shiny Cowbird, 20 Jul 2017, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall

Shiny Cowbird: The adult male first discovered visiting the feeders at Ft Macon SP, Carteret Co, NC, 25 May (Martin Wall) was, amazingly, joined by an adult female, 18 Jun (Ryan Bakelaar, Ricky Davis, m. obs.), when a brief

courtship display was observed. The pair continued at the site for several weeks, where seen by many, until the adult male was last seen 29 Jul (Andrew Guthrie). Apparently the pair successfully bred at the site, evidenced by a juvenile Shiny Cowbird photographed alongside the adult female, 5 Aug (Wall). Elsewhere along the NC coast, an adult male was photographed at a feeder in Sneads Ferry, Onslow Co, 1 Jun (Gilbert Grant).



Twenty-Five Years Ago in The Chat

Steve Shultz

Fall of 1992. The first extra-solar planets are confirmed, compact discs outsell cassette tapes for the first time, the first text message was sent, and Bill Clinton defeated George H.W. Bush and Ross Perot to become the 42nd President of the United States.

In the Carolinas, The Chat documented a leisurely 25 minute sighting of Northern Goshawk in Pender Co, NC; detailed a spring 1991 sighting of Harris's Sparrow in Durham Co, NC; related a harbinger of current climate change discussion with a report of January nesting attempts by American Robins in the Piedmont of North Carolina; and covered both opportunistic feeding by birds on insects (gulls, grackles and shorebirds foraging on ants) and insects on birds (wasps scavenging dead birds).

Briefs for the Files noted a Northern Gannet at Falls Lake, Durham Co, NC on 30 November 1991; a flock of 34 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in Wilmington, NC on 8 November 1991 (a species now very rarely found in the Carolinas); noted that Ross's Geese were sufficiently uncommon that a count of three at Pea Island, Dare Co, NC was a record high count for that state; hints that Long-billed Curlew was still a regular wintering bird Ft. Fisher, New Hanover Co, NC; notes the third record of both Say's Phoebe and Shiny Cowbird in North Carolina; and details the sighting of a Curlew Sandpiper at Pea Island, Dare Co, NC that thrilled dozens of attendees at the Carolina Bird Club Fall Meeting at Nags Head.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues>. Make change of address at <https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile>. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at <https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html>.

ANNUAL DUES

Individual or non-profit.....	\$30.00
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Sustaining and businesses.....	\$30.00
Patron.....	\$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive \$100 installments)	\$500.00
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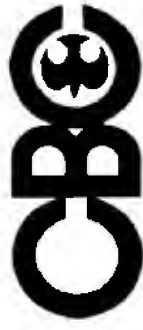
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The Chat

Quarterly Bulletin of Carolina Bird Club, Inc.
1909 Lakepark Drive, Raleigh NC 27612



Periodicals Postage Paid
at Pinehurst, NC 28374 and
additional mailing offices